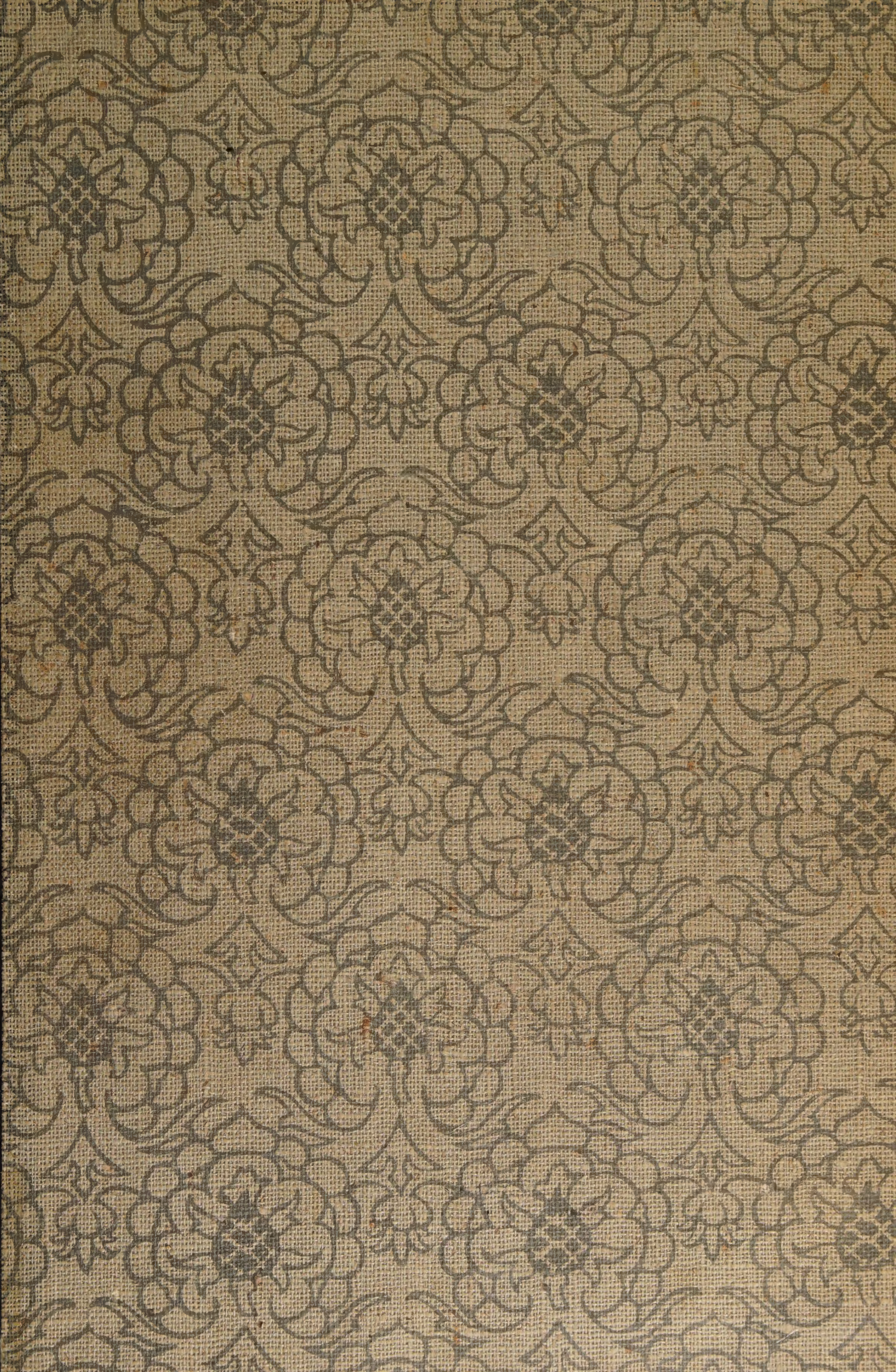


10^{00}

THE DECAMERON

PRESERVED TO POSTERITY BY JOHN BOCCACCIO

VOLUME ONE

THE DECAMERON

THE MODELL
OF WIT, MIRTH, ELOQUENCE
AND CONVERSATION

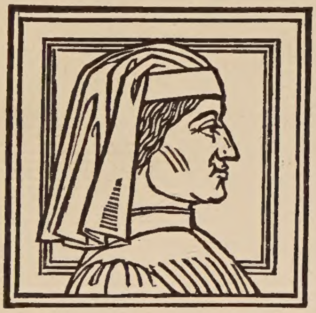
FRAMED IN TEN DAYES, OF AN HUNDRED CURIOUS
PIECES, BY SEVEN HONOURABLE LADIES,
AND THREE NOBLE GENTLEMEN;
PRESERVED TO POSTERITY BY THE RENOWNED

JOHN BOCCACCIO

THE FIRST REFINER OF ITALIAN PROSE

Translated into English anno 1620, *with an Introduction by* Edward
Hutton *and* Wood-cuts *in the* Renaissance *manner by*

FRITZ KREDEL



THE LIMITED EDITIONS CLUB, NEW YORK

Colker
~~Mezz~~
PQ
4272
.E5
A3
1940
v. 1

WITHDRAWN FROM
COOPER UNION LIBRARY

~~A
09435
B664D2
v. 1~~

Copyright 1940 by The Limited Editions Club, Inc.
Printed in the United States of America

A NOTE UPON THE TEXT

This translation of The Decameron is by an unknown hand. It is the oldest in our language of the work as a whole, though many of the hundred tales in Boccaccio's book had been put into English and included in various collections of stories from Chaucer's time onwards. 1620 was the date of its first printing: it was popular in its day, and in recent times it has won recognition as a choice piece of English prose-writing. The excellence of it lies more especially in the wit and beauty of its language: it is a very free rendering, a good deal shorter than the original, from which it was made indirectly through the medium of a French version by Antoine Le Mâcon.

When an editor faces the problem of how best to put The Decameron before readers of English, he has to decide between the advantages of this delightfully written but free old rendering on the one hand and those of an accurate modern translation on the other. An attempt to combine the merits of both by writing a close translation in the language of Shakespeare's time was made by John Payne in his earliest complete English Decameron, printed in 1886; but it is only to be expected that one using an idiom that was unnatural to him could hardly achieve the grace and ease which are essential to Boccaccio's conception of the book. A translation (omitting one story) in the literary style of our time, which is both accurate and readable, is that by J. M. Rigg, available in moderately priced editions. There are also modern translations by Richard Aldington and Frances Winwar.

In an edition such as this, which aims in its printing and illustration at presenting The Decameron in an artistically worthy form, there was especial reason to choose the text which has the greatest literary merit. And this old version, though it omits or alters passages of the Italian, preserves the sense admirably and with it much of the manner of the original. It could hardly do so if it did not come from the age in English letters corresponding most nearly to the Italian Renaissance. Boccaccio wrote the stories within a year or two of 1354; but it was not for another century and a half that Englishmen could enter fully into his world; and we can probably come no nearer to it now than through the mediation of this unidentified contemporary of Shakespeare.

If the translator had taken liberties only with the manner of the stories, adapting them to his natural style, nothing more than a reprint would be needed. That this book is not merely that is due to his having left out two of the stories altogether, and put others in their place. The two are the Tenth Novel of the Third Day and the Sixth of the Sixth Day. They are indisputably part of the book as Boccaccio wrote it, and it is hardly possible now to present his work without them; whilst the inclusion of the interlopers, which have no particular merit, would be as hard to justify. The omission of the former Novel is easily explained by its foolishly bad reputation: indeed we believe only the privately printed version of John Payne has hitherto put it all into English. But present-day taste is more offended by Bowdlerism than anything Boccaccio could write; and the story has been faithfully translated anew. The second substitution is not so readily accounted for. Here it was possible, and pleasant, to fall back on an English Decameron printed in 1702, and use its version of the tale with a few sentences altered for greater clearness.

Harry Carter

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024

https://archive.org/details/decameronofgiova0001giov_o9y5

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Volume One

THE FIRST DAY

The First Novell, 15
The Second Novell, 23
The Third Novell, 26
The Fourth Novell, 28
The Fift Novell, 31
The Sixt Novell, 33
The Seventh Novell, 35
The Eight Novell, 38
The Ninth Novell, 40
The Tenth Novell, 41

THE SECOND DAY

The First Novell, 46
The Second Novell, 49
The Third Novell, 53
The Fourth Novell, 59
The Fift Novell, 62
The Sixt Novell, 72
The Seventh Novell, 81
The Eight Novell, 96
The Ninth Novell, 108
The Tenth Novell, 117

THE THIRD DAY

The First Novell, 124
The Second Novell, 129
The Third Novell, 133
The Fourth Novell, 139
The Fifth Novell, 142
The Sixth Novell, 146
The Seaventh Novell, 151
The Eight Novell, 162
The Ninth Novell, 169
The Tenth Novell, 177

THE FOURTH DAY

The First Novell, 182
The Second Novell, 190
The Third Novell, 198
The Fourth Novell, 204
The Fift Novell, 208
The Sixth Novell, 211
The Seventh Novell, 216
The Eight Novell, 220
The Ninth Novell, 225
The Tenth Novell, 228

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

OF THE *three great writers who open the literature of the modern world, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, it is the last who has the greatest significance in the history of culture, of civilisation. Without the profound mysticism of Dante or the extraordinary sweetness and perfection of Petrarch, he was more complete than either of them, full at once of laughter and humility and love—that humanism which in him alone in his day was really a part of life. For him the centre of things was not to be found in the next world but in this. To the Divine Comedy he seems to oppose the Human Comedy, the* Decameron, *in which he not only created for Italy a classic prose, but gave the world an ever-living book, full of men and women and the courtesy, generosity, and humanity of life, which was to be the greatest literary influence in Europe during some three hundred years.*

In England certainly, and indeed almost everywhere out of Italy, the name of Boccaccio stands for a book, the Decameron. *Yet the volumes he wrote during a laborious and really uneventful life are very numerous both in verse and prose, in Latin and in Tuscan. He began to write before he was twenty years old, and he scarcely stayed his hand till he lay dying alone in Certaldo in 1375. That the* Decameron, *his greatest and most various work, should be that by which he is most widely known, is not remarkable; it is strange, however, that of all his works it should be the only one that is quite impersonal. His earlier romances are without exception* romans à clef; *under a transparent veil of allegory he tells us eagerly, even passionately, of himself, his love, his sufferings, his agony and delight. He too has confessed himself with the same intensity as St. Augustine; but we refuse to hear him. Over and over again he tells his story. One may follow it exactly from point to point, divide it into periods, name the beginning and the ending of his love, his enthusiasms, his youth and ripeness; yet we mark him not, but perhaps wisely reach down the* Decameron *from our shelves and silence him with his own words; for in the* Decameron *he is almost as completely hidden from us as is Shakespeare in his plays. And yet for all this, there is a profound unity in Boccaccio's work, which, if we can but see it, makes of all his books just the acts of a drama, the drama of his life. The* Decameron *is already to be found in essence in the* Filocolo, *as is the bitter melancholy of the* Corbaccio, *its mad folly too, and the sweetness of the songs. For the truth about Boccaccio can be summed up in one statement almost, he was a poet before all things, not only because he could express himself in perfect verse, nor even because of the grace and beauty of all his writing, his gifts of sentiment and sensibility, but because he is an interpreter of nature and of man, who knows that poetry is holy and sacred, and that one must accept it thankfully in fear and humility.*

That he has expressed himself perfectly in his work is not to be gainsaid, for though we are often ignorant of what he did, we are never in doubt as to his thoughts about things or his sensations from them. The most human writer that the Renaissance produced in Italy, he might seem in humanism to have had but two rivals in the awakening world, Chaucer and Shakespeare, who *as it happens were the one a lesser and the other a far greater man than he.*

It is strange that since his life was so full and eager in its desire for knowledge, nothing of any serious account has been written concerning him in English, and this is even unaccountable when we remember how eagerly many among our greater poets have been his debtors.

For Boccaccio was the greatest storyteller in the world! Does that seem a hard saying? But by what other title shall we greet the author of the Decameron, *who is as secure in his immortality and as great in his narrative power as the author of the* Arabian Nights, *and infinitely greater in his humanism and influence?*

The greatest work of the later fourteenth century, as the Divine Comedy *had been of the earlier, the* Decameron *sums up and reflects its period altogether impersonally, while the* Divine Comedy *would scarcely hold us at all without the impassioned personality of Dante to inform it everywhere with his profound life, his hatred, his love, his judgment of this world and the next. It is strange that the work which best represents the genius of Boccaccio, his humour and wide tolerance and love of mankind, should in this be so opposite to all his other works in the vulgar tongue, which are inextricably involved in his own personal affairs, his view of things, his love, his contempt, his hatred. Yet you will scarcely find him in all the hundred tales of the* Decameron.[1] *He speaks to us there once or twice, as we shall see, but always outside the stories, and his whole treatment of the various and infinite plots, incidents, and characters of his great work is as impersonal as life itself. The* Decameron *is an absolute work of art, as ‘detached’ as a play by Shakespeare or a portrait by Velasquez. The scheme is formal and immutable, a miracle of design in which almost everything can be expressed. To compare it with the plan of the* Arabian Nights *is to demonstrate its superiority. There you have a sleepless king, to whom a woman tells a thousand and one stories in order to save her life which this same king would have taken. You have, then, but two protagonists and an anxiety which touches but one of them, the fear of death on the part of the woman, soon forgotten in the excitement of the stories. In the* Decameron, *on the other hand, you have ten protagonists, three youths and seven ladies, and the horror which is designed to set off the stories is an universal pestilence which has already half depopulated the city of Florence and from which they are fled away. The* mise en scène *is so well known as scarcely to need describing, for the Prologue in which it is set forth is one of the most splendid pieces of descriptive narrative in all literature, impressionist too in our later manner, and absolutely convincing. Boccaccio evokes for us the city of Florence in the grip of the Black Death of 1348. We see the streets quite deserted or horrible with the dead, and over all a dreadful silence broken only by the more dreadful laughter of those whom the plague has freed from all human constraint. Fear has seized upon such of the living as death has not driven mad, ‘wherefore the sick of both sexes, ‘whose number could not be estimated, were ‘left without resource but in the charity of ‘friends (and few such there were), or the ‘interest of servants, who were hardly to be ‘had at high rates and on unseemly terms, ‘and being moreover men and women of ‘gross understanding and for the most part ‘unused to such offices, concerned them‘selves no further than to supply the imme‘diate and expressed wants of the sick and ‘to watch them die, in which service they ‘themselves not seldom perished with their*

---

[1] *The title* ‘Il Decameron’ *is badly composed from two Greek words,* ‘δέκα,’ *ten, and* ‘ἡμέρα,’ *day—ten days. Cf.* Teza, La parola ‘Decameron’ *in* Propugnatore *(1889), ii. p. 311* et seq., *and* Rajna, op. cit., *who shows that the proper form is Decameron, not Decamerone. Later some one added the sub-title ‘cognominato il Principe Galeotto’; cf.* Inferno, *v. 137.*

gains. In consequence of which dearth of servants and dereliction of the sick by neighbours, kinsfolk, and friends, it came to pass—a thing perhaps never before heard of—that no woman, however dainty, fair, or well-born she might be, shrank, when stricken with the disease, from the attentions of a man, no matter whether he were young or no, or scrupled to expose to him every part of her body with no more shame than if he had been a woman, submitting of necessity to that which her malady required; wherefrom, perchance, there resulted in after time some loss of modesty in such as recovered. . . . What need we add, but that such and so grievous was the harshness of heaven, and perhaps in some degree of man, that, what with the fury of the pestilence, the panic of those whom it spared and their consequent neglect or desertion of not a few of the stricken in their need, it is believed without any manner of doubt, that between March and the ensuing July upwards of a hundred thousand human beings lost their lives within the walls of the city of Florence, which before the deadly visitation would not have been supposed to contain so many people! How many grand palaces, how many stately homes, how many splendid houses once full of retainers, of lords, of ladies were now left desolate of all, even to the meanest servant! . . . Irksome it is to myself to rehearse in detail so mournful a history. Wherefore, being minded to pass over so much thereof as I fairly can, I say that our city being thus depopulated, it so happened, as I afterwards learned from one of credit, that on Tuesday morning after Divine service the venerable church of Santa Maria Novella was almost deserted save for the presence of seven young ladies habited sadly, in keeping with the season. . . . The first, being the eldest of the seven, we will call Pampinea, the second Fiammetta, the third Filomena, the fourth Emilia, the fifth we will distinguish as Lauretta, the sixth as Neifile, and the last, not without reason, shall be named Elisa. 'Twas not of set purpose but by mere chance that these ladies met in the same part of the church, but at length, grouping themselves into a sort of circle, . . . they gave up saying paternosters and began to converse (among other topics) on the times. . . . Here we tarry (said Pampinea) one would think for no other purpose than to bear witness to the number of corpses that are brought hither for interment. . . . If we quit the church we see dead or sick folk carried about, or we see those who for their crimes were of late exiled, . . . but who now in contempt of the law, well knowing their ministers are sick or dead, have returned. . . . Nor hear we aught but: Such and such are dead. . . . Such and such are dying. . . . Or go we home, what see we there? I know not if you are in like case with me; but there where once were servants in plenty I find none left but my maid and shudder with terror. . . . And turn or tarry where I may, I encounter only the ghosts of the departed, not with their wonted mien but with something horrible in their aspect that appals me. . . . So (she continues) I should deem it most wise in us, our case being what it is, if, as many others have done before us and are doing now, we were to quit the place, and shunning like death the evil example of others, betake ourselves to the country and there live as honourable women on one of the estates, of which none of us has any lack, with all cheer of festal gathering and other delights so long as in no particular we overstep the bounds of reason. There we shall hear the chant of birds, have sight of green hills and plains, of cornfields undulating like the sea, of trees of a thousand sorts; there also we shall have a larger view of the heavens, which, however harsh to usward, yet deny us not their eternal beauty; things fairer far for eyes to rest on than the desolate walls of our city. . . . For though the hus-

bandmen die there even as here the citizens, they are dispersed in scattered homes, and so ’tis less painful to witness. Nor, so far as I can see, is there a soul here whom we shall desert; rather we may truly say that we are ourselves deserted. . . . No censure then can fall on us if we do as I propose; and otherwise grievous suffering, perhaps death, may ensue.’

Pampinea’s plan was received with eagerness, and while they were still discussing it there came into the church three young men, Pamfilo, Filostrato, and Dioneo, the youngest about twenty-five years of age. These seemed to the ladies to be sent by Providence, for their only fear till now had been in carrying out their plans alone. So Pampinea, who had a kinsman among them, approached them, and greeting them gaily opened her plan and besought them on behalf of herself and her friends to join their company. The young men as soon as they found she was in earnest answered with alacrity that they were ready, and promptly before leaving the church set matters in train for their departure, and the next day at dawn they set out. Arrived at the estate they entered a beautiful palace in the midst of a garden, and again it was Pampinea who proposed that one among them should be elected chief for a day so that each might be in turn in authority. They at once chose Pampinea, whom Filomena crowned with bay leaves. Later, towards evening, they ‘hied them to a meadow . . . and at the queen’s command ranged themselves in a circle on the grass and hearkened while she spoke thus: “You mark that the sun is yet high, the heat intense, and the silence unbroken save by the cicale among the olives. It were therefore the height of folly to quit this spot at present. Here the air is cool, and the prospect fair, and here, observe, are dice and chess. Take then your pleasure as you will; but if you hear my advice you will find pastime for the hot hours before us, not in play in which the loser must needs be vexed, . . . but in telling stories in which the invention of one may afford solace to all the company of his hearers.”’

This was found pleasing to all, and so Pampinea turned at last to Pamfilo who sat at her right hand, and bade him lead off with one of his stories. So begins the series of immortal tales which compose the Decameron.

Such, then, is the incomparable design which the Decameron fills, and beside it the mere haphazard telling of The Hundred Merry Tales seems barbarous, the setting of The Thousand and One Nights inadequate. That Boccaccio’s design has indeed ever been bettered might well be denied, but in the Canterbury Tales Chaucer certainly equalled it. If the occasion there is not so dramatic nor the surroundings at once so poignant and so beautiful, the pilgrimage progresses with the tales and allows of such a dramatic entry as that of the Canon and the Canon’s yeoman at Boghton-under-Blee. That entry was most fitting and opportune, right in every way, and though there is no inherent reason why the Decameron itself should not have been similarly broken in upon, the very stillness of that garden in the sunshine would have made any such interruption less acceptable. The true weakness of the plan of the Decameron in comparison with that of the Canterbury Tales is not a weakness of design but of character. Each of Chaucer’s pilgrims is a complete human being; they all live for us more vividly than any other folk, real or imagined, of the fourteenth century in England, and each is different from the others, a perfect human character and personality. But in the protagonists of the Decameron it is not so. There is nothing, or almost nothing, to choose between them. Pampinea is not different from Filomena, and may even be confused with Pamfilo or Filostrato. We know nothing of them; they are without any character or personality, and indeed the only one of them all who stands out in any way is Dioneo, and that merely because he may usually be depended upon for the most licentious tale of the day. In Chaucer the tales often weary us, but the tellers never do; in Boccaccio the tales never weary us, but the tellers always do. Just there we come upon the fundamental difference between English, and what I may call perhaps Latin art. It is the same to-day as yesterday. In the work of D'Annunzio, as in the work of the French novelists of our time, it is always an affair of situation, that is to say, the narrative or drama rises out of situation, rather than out of the character of the actors, while even in the most worthless English work there is, as there has always been, an attempt at least to realise character, to make it the fundamental thing in the book, from which the narrative proceeds and by which it lives and is governed.

In dealing with the Decameron, then, we must, more or less, leave the narrators themselves out of the question; they are not to be judged; they are but an excuse for the stories, and are really puppets who can in no way be held responsible for them, so that if now and then an especially licentious tale is told by one of those 'virtuous' ladies, it is of no account, for the tales are altogether independent of those who tell them. But if these young and fair protagonists soon pass from our remembrance in the infinitely vivid and living stories they tell, yes, almost like a phonograph, the mise en scène, the background of a plague-stricken and deserted city, the beauty and languorous peace of the delicious gardens in which we listen, always remain with us, so much so that tradition has identified the two palaces which are the setting of the whole Decameron with two of those villas which are the glory of the Florentine contado.

The first of these palaces—that to which they came on that Wednesday morning—was, Boccaccio tells us, not more than 'two short miles from the city.' There 'on the brow of the hill was a palace, with a fine and spacious courtyard in the midst, and with loggias and halls and rooms, all and each one in itself beautiful and ornamented tastefully with jocund paintings. It was surrounded too with grass plots and marvellous gardens, and with wells of coldest water, and there were cellars of rare wines, a thing perhaps more suited to curious topers than to quiet and virtuous ladies. And the palace was clean and in good order, the beds prepared and made, and everything decorated with spring flowers, and the floors covered with rushes, all much to their satisfaction.' This 'estate' has always been identified with Poggio Gherardo, which now stands above the road to Settignano, about a mile from that village and some two miles from the Porta alle Croce of Florence. In the fourteenth century certainly it must have been equidistant on all sides from the roads, the nearest being the Via Aretina Nuova by the Arno and the road to Fiesole or the Via Faentina, for the way from Florence to Settignano was a mule-track.

Poggio Gherardo is but a stone's throw from Corbignano, the country house—half farm, half villa—which Margherita brought to Boccaccino as part of her dowry, and where, as we have seen, it appears likely that Boccaccio spent his first youth. But Poggio Gherardo is not the only palace of the Decameron. At the close of the second day Madonna Filomena took the laurel crown from her head and crowned Neifile queen, and it was she who then proposed that they should change their residence.

'To-morrow, as you know,' said she, 'is Friday, and the next day is Saturday, and both are days which are apt to be tedious to most of us on account of the kind of food we take on them; and then Friday was the day on which He who died that we might live suffered His Passion, and it is *'therefore worthy of reverence, and ought, 'as I think, to be spent rather in prayer than 'in telling tales. And on Saturday it is the 'custom for women to wash the powder out 'of their hair, and make themselves generally 'sweet and neat; also they use to fast out of 'reverence for the Virgin Mother of God, 'and in honour of the coming rest from any 'and every work. Therefore, since we cannot, on that day either, carry out our established order of life, I think it would be 'well to refrain from reciting tales also. And 'as by then we shall have been here already 'four days, I think we might seek a new 'place if we would avoid visitors; and indeed I have already a spot in my mind.' And it happened as she said, for they all praised her words and looked forward longingly to Sunday. On that very day the sun was already high when, 'with slow steps, 'the queen with her friends and the three 'gentlemen, led by the songs of some twenty 'nightingales, took her way westward by an 'unfrequented lane full of green herbs and 'flowers just opening after the dawn. So 'gossiping and playing and laughing with 'her company, she led them . . . to a beautiful and splendid palace before half of the 'third hour was gone.' It is by this 'unfrequented lane' that we too may pass to the Villa Palmieri, which tradition assures us is the very place. 'When they had entered and 'inspected everything, and seen that the 'halls and rooms had been cleaned and decorated and plentifully supplied with all that 'was needed for sweet living, they praised 'its beauty and good order, and admired the 'owner's magnificence. And on descending, 'even more delighted were they with the 'pleasant and spacious courts, the cellars 'filled with choice wines, and the beautifully 'fresh water which was everywhere round 'about. Then they went into the garden, 'which was on one side of the palace, and 'was surrounded by a wall, and the beauty 'and magnificence of it at first sight made 'them eager to examine it more closely. It 'was crossed in all directions by long, broad, 'and straight walks, over which the vines, 'which that year made a great show of giving many grapes, hung gracefully in arched 'festoons, and being then in full blossom, 'filled the whole garden with their sweet 'smell, and this, mingled with the odours of 'the other flowers, made so sweet a perfume 'that they seemed to be in the spicy gardens 'of the East. The sides of the walks were 'almost closed with red and white roses and 'with jessamine, so that they gave sweet 'odours and shade not only in the morning 'but when the sun was high, and one might 'walk there all day without fear. What flowers there were there, how various and how 'ordered, it would take too long to tell, but 'there was not one which in our climate is 'to be praised, that was not found there 'abundantly. Perhaps the most delightful 'thing therein was a meadow in the midst, 'of the finest grass, and all so green that it 'seemed almost black, all sprinkled with a 'thousand various flowers, shut in by oranges 'and cedars, the which bore the ripe fruit 'and the young fruit too and the blossom, 'offering a shade most grateful to the eyes 'and also a delicious perfume. In the midst 'of this meadow there was a fountain of the 'whitest marble marvellously carved, that 'within—I do not know whether artificially 'or from a natural spring—threw so much 'water and so high towards the sky through 'a statue which stood there on a pedestal, 'that it would not have needed more to turn 'a mill. The water fell back again with a 'delicious sound into the clear waters of the 'basin, and the surplus was carried off 'through a subterranean way into little 'water channels, most beautifully and artfully made about the meadow, and afterwards it ran into others round about, and 'so watered every part of the garden, and, 'collected at length in one place, whence it 'had entered the beautiful garden, it turned 'two mills, much to the profit, as you may 'suppose, of the* signore, *pouring down at*

'last in a stream clear and sweet into the valley.'

If this should seem a mere pleasaunce of delight, the vision of a poet, the garden of a dream, we have only to remember how realistically and simply Boccaccio has described for us that plague-stricken city, scarcely more than a mile away, to be assured of its truthfulness. And then, Villa Palmieri is nearly as beautiful to-day as it was so long ago; only while the gardens with their pergolas of vines, their hedges of jasmine and crimson roses, their carved marble fountains remain, the two mills he speaks of are gone, having been destroyed in a flood of the Mugnone in 1409, less than sixty years after he wrote of them.

Nor are the two palaces the only places that we may identify in the Decameron, set as it is in the country about Florence. It was a summer afternoon, six days had almost past, Dioneo had just been crowned king by Madonna Elisa; the tales had been short that day, and the sun was yet high, so that Madonna, seeing the gentlemen were set down to play at dice (and such is the custom of men), called her friends to her and said: '"Ever since we have been here I have wished to show you a place not far off where, I believe, none of you have ever been; it is called La Valle delle Donne, and till to-day I have not had a chance to speak of it. It is yet early; if you choose to come with me, I promise you that you will be pleased with your walk." And they answered they were all willing. So, without saying a word to the gentlemen, they called one of their women to attend them, and after a walk of nearly a mile they came to the place which they entered by a strait path where there burst forth a fair crystal stream, and they found it so beautiful and so pleasant, especially in those hot still hours of afternoon, that nothing could excel it; and as some of them told me later, the little plain in the valley was an exact circle, as though it had been described by a pair of compasses, though it was indeed rather the work of Nature than of man. It was about half a mile in circumference, surrounded by six hills of moderate height, on each of which was a palace built in the form of a little castle. . . . And then what gave them the greatest delight was the rivulet that came through a valley which divided two hills, and running through the rocks fell suddenly and sweetly in a waterfall, seeming, as it was dashed and sprinkled in drops all about, like so much quicksilver. Coming into the little plain beneath this fall, the stream was received in a fine canal, and running swiftly to the midst of the plain formed itself in a pool not deeper than a man's breast, and so clear that you might see the gravelly bottom and the pebbles intermixed, which indeed you might count; and there were fishes there also swimming up and down in great plenty; and the water that overflowed was received into another little canal which carried it out of the valley. There the ladies all came together, and . . . finding it commendable . . . did, as 'twas very hot and they deemed themselves secure from observation, resolve to take a bath. So having bidden their maid wait and keep watch over the access to the vale, and give them warning if haply any should approach it, they all seven undressed and got into the water, which to the whiteness of their flesh was even such a veil as fine glass is to the vermeil of the rose. They being then in the water, the clearness of which was thereby in no wise affected, did presently begin to go hither and thither after the fish, which had much ado where to bestow themselves so as to escape out of their hands. . . . 'Twas quite early when they returned to the palace, so that they found the gallants still at play.'

This delicious spot, called to this day the Valle delle Donne, may be reached from the 'unfrequented lane' by which they all passed from Poggio Gherardo to Villa Palmieri;

as Landor, who lived close by, tells us.

'Where the hewn rocks of Fiesole impend
O'er Doccia's dell, and fig and olive blend,
There the twin streams of Affrico unite,
One dimly seen, the other out of sight,
But ever playing in his swollen bed
Of polisht stone and willing to be led
Where clustering vines protect him from the sun—
Here by the lake Boccaccio's fair brigade
Bathed in the stream and tale for tale repaid.'

The hundred tales that were thus told in the shade of those two beautiful gardens may doubtless be traced to an infinite number of sources—Egyptian, Arabian, Persian, and French; but these origins matter little. Boccaccio was almost certainly unaware of them, for the most part at any rate, gathering his material as he did from the tales he had heard, up and down Italy. Certainly to the Contes *and* Fabliaux *of Northern France a third part of the* Decameron *may be traced, much too to Indian and Persian sources, and a little to the* Gesta Romanorum. *But one might as well accuse Chaucer or Shakespeare of a want of originality because they took what they wanted where they found it, as arraign Boccaccio for a dependence he was quite unaware of on sources such as these. He has made the tales his own. The* Decameron *is a work of art, a world in itself, and its effect upon us who read it is the effect of life which includes, for its own good, things moral and immoral. The book has the variety of the world, and is full of an infinity of people, who represent for us the fourteenth century in Italy, in all its fullness, almost. It deals with man as life does, never taking him very seriously, or without a certain indifference, a certain irony and laughter. Yet it is full too of a love of courtesy, of luck, of all sorts of adventures, both gallant and sad. In details, at any rate, it is true and even realistic, crammed with observation of those customs and types which made up the life of the time. It is dramatic, ironic, comic, tragic, philosophic, and even lyrical; full of indulgence for human error, an absolutely human book beyond any work of Dante's or Petrarch's or Froissart's. Only Chaucer is more complete in his humanism, his love of all sorts and conditions of men. Perfect in organism, in construction and in freedom each of these tales is in some sort a living part of life, and a criticism of it. And almost any one could be treated by a modern writer in his own way, and remain fundamentally the same and fundamentally true. What immorality there is is rather owing to the French sources of some of the tales than to any invention on the part of Boccaccio, who, as we have seen, later came to deplore it. But we must remember that the book was written to give delight to 'amorous women,' and women have always delighted in 'immoral literature,' and in fact write most of it to-day.*

If we compare this work with that of Dante, a much greater man, it holds its own because of its humanity. Dante puts the centre of gravity into the next world. He hates this world almost without ceasing, and has dared to arraign it before his hatred. His satire is cruel, unjust, passionate, and vindictive, even personally vindictive. Of course we are wont to excuse all this on account of the genius which it expressed, of its sincerity and beauty of form. Boccaccio, however, with less than half Dante's genius, was not subject to his madness. He was content to satirise what is bad, the bad customs of ecclesiastics and of fools; but he excuses and pardons all too because of the 'misfortunes of the time,' and above all he understands it.

But if we may not compare the Decameron, *the Human Comedy, with the* Divine Comedy *of Dante as a work of art, we may claim for it that it was the greatest though* not quite the first prose work in the Tuscan tongue. But Italian prose may be said to consist of the Decameron alone for a hundred years after Boccaccio's death. It is written in a very beautiful but very complicated style, a sort of poetical prose—exquisite, it is true, but often without simplicity.

That the Decameron, though widely read and enthusiastically received, was censured very strongly in its own day we gather from the Proem to the Fourth Day and from the Conclusion to the work; while later the book did not escape the knife of the Church though it was never suppressed. That it was also enthusiastically received we know from contemporary documents, and though Petrarch failed to understand it, he praised it in certain places, which were those it seems that were the most rhetorical. He translated the last tale of Griselda into Latin, however, but as he tells us, he had known this for many years. Petrarch, however, stood alone; from the day the Decameron was finished its influence both in Italy and abroad was very great.

The original manuscript has disappeared, and the oldest we possess seems to be that written in 1368 by Francesco Mannelli, though the later Hamilton MS. now in Berlin is the better of the two. More than ten editions were, however, printed in the fifteenth century, and some seventy-seven in the sixteenth; while there is not a Novelliere in Italian literature for many centuries who has not inspired himself with the Decameron. Its fortune abroad was almost equally good. Hans Sachs, Molière, La Fontaine, Lope de Vega, to mention only European names, were in its debt; and in England our greatest poets have drawn from it, once the form and often the substance of their work. One has only to name Chaucer, Sir Philip Sidney, Shakespeare, Dryden, Keats, and Tennyson to suggest England's debt to Boccaccio. And although our prose literature, strangely enough, produced no great original example of this school of fiction, its influence was shown by the number of translations and imitations of the 'mery bookes of Italy,' when, according to Ascham, 'a tale of Bocace was made more 'account of than a story of the Bible.'

In his Praise of Poets, Thomas Churchyard, referring to Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, says:

> 'In Italy of yore did dwell
> Three men of special spreete,
> Whose gallant stiles did sure excell
> Their verses were so sweet.'

Of these three great Italians, Dante was by far the least known, and William Thomas in his Dictionarie (1550) defines 'Dante Aldighieri' as 'the name of a famous poet 'in the Italian tongue,' while he does not think it necessary to explain who Petrarch and Boccaccio were. Sir Philip Sidney, it is true, refers to Dante several times, with the other two, and even mentions Beatrice in his Defence of Poesie, yet there is no trace of Dante's influence in his work. The only writer after Chaucer who shows internal evidence of knowing Dante fairly well, is Sir John Harrington, the translator of Orlando Furioso. In his Apology of Poetry he refers to Dante's relations to Virgil, and in the Allegorie of the fourth book of his translation he translated the first five lines of the Inferno:

> 'While yet my life was in the middle race,
> I found I wandered in a darksome wood,
> The right way lost with mine unsteadie pace. . . .'

Spenser does not mention Dante though he used him, but in the Epistle to Gabriel Harvey prefixed to the Shepherd's Calendar, he speaks of Boccaccio as well as of Petrarch and others.

That Boccaccio was well known in England, at least by name, in the fourteenth century, seems certain. Sacchetti (1335–1400) in the Proemio to his Novelle writes as follows: '. . . and taking into considera- 'tion the excellent Florentine poet Messer

'Giovanni Boccaccio, who wrote the Book of the Hundred Tales in one material effort of his great intellect, . . . that (book) is so generally published and sought after, that even in France and England they have translated it into their language . . . and I, Franco Sacchetti, though only a rude and unrefined man, have made up my mind to write the present work.' All trace of any such translation, if indeed it was ever made, has been lost. In fact, it might seem that the only man in England at that time really capable of carrying out such a task, worthily at least, was Geoffrey Chaucer, who, though for some reason we can never know, he refused to mention Boccaccio's name, adapted and translated the Teseide, *the* Filostrato, *and three tales from the* Decameron; *to wit, the first of the Eighth Day, the fifth of the Tenth Day, and the tenth of the Tenth Day. May it not have been Chaucer's work to which Sacchetti referred? It was not till 1566 that any translation of isolated stories from the* Decameron *appeared; in that year and the following Painter's* Palace of Pleasure *was published, which contained sixteen stories translated from the* Decameron. *Then in 1579 came the* Forest of Fancy *by H. C., in which two more appeared, while Tarlton's* News out of Purgatorie *(1590) contained four more, and the* Cobler of Caunterburie, *published in the same year, two more. These and other translations of isolated stories will best be shown by a table.*

Such were the stories from the Decameron *that had been translated in English when in 1620 the first practically complete edi-*

DECAMERON,	Day	I.	Nov.	3	Painter's *Palace of Pleasure,* I. 30 (1566).
"	"	I.	"	5	" " " II. 16 (1567).
"	"	I.	"	8	" " " I. 31
"	"	I.	"	10	" " " I. 32
"	"	II.	"	2	" " " I. 33
"	"	II.	"	3	" " " I. 34
"	"	II.	"	4	" " " I. 35
"	"	II.	"	5	" " " I. 36
"	"	II.	"	6	Greene's *Perimedes the Blacksmith* (1588).
"	"	II.	"	8	Painter's *Palace of Pleasure,* I. 37.
"	"	II.	"	9	*Westward for Smelts,* by Kind Kit of Kingston, II. (1620).
"	"	III.	"	5	H. C.'s *Forest of Fancy,* I. (1579).
"	"	III.	"	9	Painter's *Palace of Pleasure,* I. 38.
"	"	III.	"	1	" " " I. 39 and others.
"	"	IV.	"	2	Tarlton's *News out of Purgatorie,* 2 (1590).
"	"	IV.	"	4	Turberville's *Tragical Tales,* 6 (*ca.* 1576).
"	"	IV.	"	5	" " " 7.
"	"	IV.	"	7	" " " 9.
"	"	IV.	"	8	" " " 10.
"	"	IV.	"	9	" " " 4.
"	"	V.	"	1	*A Pleasant and Delightful History of Galesu. Cymon a Iphigenia,* etc., by J. C. gent. *Cas* 1584.
"	"	V.	"	2	Greene's *Perimedes the Blacksmith.*
"	"	V.	"	7	H. C.'s *Forest of Fancy,* II.
"	"	V.	"	8	*A notable History of Nastagio and Traversari,* etc., trs. in English verse by C. T. (1569), and Turberville, I., and *Forest of Fancy.*

Decameron,	Day	vi.	Nov.	4	Tarlton's *News,* No. 4.
"	"	vi.	"	10	" " No. 5.
"	"	vii.	"	1	*The Cobler of Caunterburie,* No. 2.
"	"	vii.	"	4	*Westward for Smelts,* No. 3.
"	"	vii.	"	5	Cf. Thomas Twyne's *Schoolmaster* (1576).
"	"	vii.	"	6	Tarlton's *News,* No. 7.
"	"	vii.	"	7	*Hundred Mery Talys,* No. 3 (1526).
"	"	vii.	"	8	*The Cobler of Caunterburie.*
"	"	viii.	"	4	*Nachgeahunt of Whetstone* (1583).
"	"	viii.	"	7	Painter's *Palace of Pleasure,* ii. 31.
"	"	ix.	"	2	Thomas Twyne's *Schoolmaster.* William Warner's *Albion's England* (1586–1592).
"	"	ix.	"	6	Cf. *A Right Pleasant Historie of the Mylner of Abingdon* (?).
"	"	x.	"	3	Painter's *Palace of Pleasure,* ii. 18.
"	"	x.	"	4	" " " ii. 19.
"	"	x.	"	5	" " " ii. 17.
"	"	x.	"	8	*The History of Trytone and Gesyppus,* Trs. out of the Latin by William Wallis (?), and *The Boke of the Governors* by Sir Thomas Elyot, lib. ii. cap xii. (1531).
"	"	x.	"	9	Painter's *Palace of Pleasure,* ii. 20.
"	"	x.	"	10	*The Pleasant and Sweet History of Patient Grissel* (s.a.) *and another* (1619).

tion appeared, translated inaccurately, but very splendidly, apparently from the French version of Antoine Le Mâcon. It is this version that appears here in the Tudor Translations. Isaac Jaggard published it, in folio in two parts, with woodcuts, and the title bore no translator's name. In 1625 this edition was reprinted, the title bearing the legend 'Isaac Jaggard for M. Lownes': other editions appeared in 1655 and 1657 and 1684, making five editions in all during the seventeenth century. In 1700 Dryden's translations appeared of the Three Tales: Decameron *iv. 1, v. 1, and v. 8. A new translation, practically complete, appeared in 1702, and was, I think, twice reprinted in 1722 and 1741. Eight editions were published in the nineteenth century and one has appeared already in the twentieth. The first really complete translation to appear in English, however, was that of Mr. John Payne, printed for the Villon Society (1886), but the first complete translation to pass into general circulation was that of Mr. J. M. Rigg, 1896–1905, which is rendered with a careful accuracy and much spirit.*

'The ordinary recreations which we have in winter,' says Burton in the Anatomy of Melancholy, *'and in most solitary times busy our minds with, are Cards, Tables and Dice, Shovel-board, Chess-play, the Philosopher's game of Wall-trunks, Shuttle-cock, Billiards, Music, Masks, Singing, Dancing, Yulegames, Frolicks, Jests, Riddles, Catches, Purposes, Questions and Commands, Merry Tales of Errant Knights, Queens, Lovers, Lords, Ladies, Giants, Dwarfs, Thieves, Cheaters, Witches, Fairies, Goblins, Friars, etc., such as the old women told [of] Psyche in Apuleius, Boccaccio's Novels and the rest,* quarum auditione pueri delectantur, senes narratione, *which some delight to hear, some to tell, all are well pleased with.'*

Well, after all, we are our fathers' sons, *and (God be thanked) there are still winter evenings in which, while the rest are occupied with Burton's frolicks and jests, dancing and singing and card-play, we, in some cosy place, may still turn the old immortal pages.*

EDWARD HUTTON

THE DECAMERON

CONTAINING AN HUNDRED PLEASANT NOVELLES

Wherein, after demonstration made by the Author, upon what occasion it happened,
that the persons (of whom we shall speake hereafter)
should thus meet together
to make so queint a Narration of Novels:
Hee declareth unto you, that they first begin to devise and conferre
under the government of Madam Pampinea,
and of such matters as may be most pleasing to them all.

THE INDUCTION OF THE AUTHOR

TO THE FOLLOWING DISCOURSES

Gracious Ladies, so often as I consider with my selfe, and observe respectively, how naturally you are enclined to compassion; as many times doe I acknowledge, that this present worke of mine, will (in your judgement) appeare to have but a harsh and offensive beginning, in regard of the mournfull remembrance it beareth at the verie entrance of the last Pestilentiall mortality, universally hurtfull to all that beheld it, or otherwise came to knowledge of it. But for all that, I desire it may not be so dreadfull to you, to hinder your further proceeding in reading, as if none were to looke thereon, but with sighes and teares. For, I could rather wish, that so fearefull a beginning, should seeme but as an high and steepy hil appeares to them, that attempt to travell farre on foote, and ascending the same with some difficulty, come afterward to walk upon a goodly even plaine, which causeth the more contentment in them, because the attayning thereto was hard and painfull. For even as pleasures are cut off by griefe and anguish; so sorrowes cease by joyes most sweete and happie arriving.

After this briefe mollestation; briefe I say, because it is contained within small compasse of Writing; immediately followeth the most sweete and pleasant taste of pleasure, whereof (before) I made promise to you. Which (peradventure) could not bee expected by such a beginning, if promise stood not thereunto engaged. And indeed, if I could well have conveyed you to the center of my desire, by any other way, then so rude and rocky a passage as this is, I would gladly have done it. But because without this Narration, we could not demonstrate the occasion how and wherefore the matters hapned, which you shall reade in the ensuing Discourses: I must set them downe (even as constrained thereto by meere necessity) in writing after this manner.

The yeare of our blessed Saviours incarnation, 1348, that memorable mortality happened in the excellent City, farre beyond all the rest in Italy; which plague, by operation of the superiour bodies, or rather for our enormous iniquities, by the just anger of God was sent upon us mortals. Some few yeeres before, it tooke beginning in the Easterne partes, sweeping thence an innumerable quantity of living soules: extending it selfe afterward from place to place Westward, until it seized on the said City. Where neither humane skill or providence, could use any prevention, notwithstanding it was cleansed of many annoyances, by diligent Officers thereto deputed: besides prohibition of all sickly persons enterance, and all possible provision dayly used for conservation of such as were in health, with incessant prayers and supplications of devoute people, for the asswaging of so dangerous a sicknesse.

About the beginning of the yeare, it also began in very strange manner, as appeared by divers admirable effects; yet not as it had done in the East Countries, where Lord or Lady being touched therewith, manifest signes of inevitable death followed thereon, by bleeding at the nose. But here it began with yong children, male and female, either under the armepits, or in the groine by certaine swellings, in some to the bignesse of an Apple, in others like an Egge, and so in divers greater or lesser, which (in their vulgar Language) they termed to be a Botch or Byle. In very short time after, those two infected parts were growne mortiferous, and would disperse abroad indifferently, to all parts of the body; whereupon, such was the quality of the disease, to shew it selfe by blacke or blew spottes, which would appeare on the armes of many, others on their thighes, and every part else of the body: in some great and few, in others small and thicke.

Now, as the Byle (at the beginning) was an assured signe of neere approaching death; so prooved the spots likewise to such as had them: for the curing of which sicknesse it seemed, that the Physitians counsell, the vertue of Medicines, or any application else, could not yeeld any remedy: but rather it plainely appeared, that either the nature of the disease would not endure it, or ignorance in the Physitians could not comprehend from whence the cause proceeded, and so by consequent, no resolution was to be determined. Moreover, beside the number of such as were skilfull in Art, many more both women and men, without ever having any knowledge in Physicke, became Physitians: so that not onely few were healed, but (well-neere) all dyed, within three dayes after the saide signes were seene; some sooner, and others later, commonly without either Feaver, or any other accident.

And this pestilence was yet of farre greater power or violence; for, not onely healthfull persons speaking to the sicke, comming to see them, or ayring cloathes in kindnesse to comfort them, was an occasion of ensuing death: but touching their garments, or any foode whereon the sicke person fed, or any thing else used in his service, seemed to transferre the disease from the sicke to the sound, in very rare and miraculous manner. Among which matter of marvell, let me tell you one thing, which if the eyes of many (as well as mine owne) had not seene, hardly could I be perswaded to write it, much lesse to beleeve it, albeit a man of good credit should report it. I say, that the quality of this contagious pestilence was not onely of such efficacy, in taking and catching it one of another, either men or women: but it extended further, even in the apparent view of many, that the cloathes, or any thing else, wherein one died of that disease, being toucht, or lyen on by any beast, farre from the kind or quality of man, they did not onely contaminate and infect the said beast, were it Dogge, Cat, or any other; but also it died very soone after.

Mine owne eyes (as formerly I have said) among divers other, one day had evident experience heereof: for some poore ragged cloathes of linnen and wollen, torne from a wretched body dead of that disease, and hurled in the open streete; two Swine going by, and (according to their naturall inclination) seeking for foode on every dunghill, tossed and tumbled the cloaths with their snouts, rubbing their heads likewise upon them; and immediately, each turning twice or thrice about, they both fell downe dead on the saide cloathes, as being fully infected with the contagion of them: which accident, and other the like, if not far greater, begat divers feares and imaginations in them that beheld them, all tending to a most inhumane and uncharitable end; namely, to flie thence from the sicke, and touching any thing of theirs, by which meanes they thought their health should be safely warranted.

Some there were, who considered with themselves, that living soberly, with abstinence from all superfluity; it would be a sufficient resistance against all hurtfull accidents. So combining themselves in a sociable manner, they lived as separatists from all other company, being shut up in such houses, where no sicke body should be neere them. And there, for their more security, they used delicate viands and excellent wines, avoiding luxurie, and refusing speech to one another, not looking forth at the windowes, to heare no cries of dying people, or see any coarses carried to buriall; but having musicall instruments, lived there in all possible pleasure. Others, were of a contrary opinion, who avouched, that there was no other physicke more certaine, for a disease so desperate, then to drinke hard, be merry among themselves, singing continually, walking every where, and satisfying their appetites with whatsoever they desired, laughing, and mocking at every mournefull accident, and so they vowed to spend day and night: for now they would goe to one Taverne, then to another, living without any rule or measure; which they might very easily doe, because every one of them, (as if he were to live no longer in this World) had even forsaken all things that hee had. By meanes whereof, the most part of the houses were become common, and all strangers, might do the like (if they pleased to adventure it) even as boldly as the Lord or owner, without any let or contradiction.

Yet in all this their beastly behaviour, they were wise enough, to shun (so much as they might) the weake and sickly: In misery and affliction of our City, the venerable authority of the Lawes, as well divine as humane, was even destroyed, as it were, through want of the lawfull Ministers of them. For they being all dead, or lying sicke with the rest, or else lived so solitary, in such great necessity of servants and attendants, as they could not execute any office, whereby it was lawfull for every one to do as he listed.

Betweene these two rehearsed extremities of life, there were other of a more moderate temper, not being so daintily dieted as the first, nor drinking so dissolutely as the second; but used all things sufficient for their appetites, and without shutting up themselves, walked abroad, some carrying sweete nose-gayes of flowers in their hands; others odoriferous herbes, and others divers kinds of spiceries, holding them to their noses, and thinking them most comfortable for the braine, because the ayre seemed to be much infected by the noysome smell of dead carkases, and other hurtfull savours. Some other there were also of more inhumane minde (howbeit peradventure it might be the surest) saying, that there was no better physicke against the pestilence, nor yet so good, as to flie away from it, which argument mainely moving them, and caring for no body but themselves, very many, both men and women, forsooke the City, their owne houses, their Parents, Kindred, Friends, and Goods, flying to other mens dwellings else-where. As if the wrath of God, in punnishing the sinnes of men with this plague, would fall heavily upon none, but such as were enclosed within the City wals; or else perswading themselves, that not any should there bee left alive, but that the finall ending of all things was come.

Now albeit these persons in their diversity of opinions died not all, so undoubtedly they did not all escape; but many among them becomming sicke, and making a generall example of their flight and folly, among them that could not stirre out of their beds, they languished more perplexedly then the other did. Let us omit, that one Citizen fled after another, and one neighbour had not any care of another, Parents nor kinred never visiting them, but utterly they were forsaken on all sides: this tribulation pierced into the hearts of men, and with such a dreadfull terrour, that one Brother forsooke another, the Unkle the Nephew, the Sister the Brother, and the Wife her Husband: nay, a matter much greater, and almost incredible; Fathers and Mothers fled away from their owne Children, even as if they had no way appertained to them. In regard whereof, it could be no otherwise, but that a countlesse multitude of men and women fell sicke; finding no charity among their friends, except a very few, and subject to the avarice of servants, who attended them constrainedly, (for great and unreasonable wages) yet few of those attendants to be found any where too. And they were men or women but of base condition, as also of groser understanding, who never before had served in any such necessities, nor indeed were any way else to be imployed; but to give the sicke person such things as hee called for, or to awaite the houre of his death; in the performance of which service, oftentimes for gaine, they lost their owne lives.

In this extreame calamity, the sicke being thus forsaken of neighbors, kinred, and friends, standing also in such need of servants; a custome came up among them, never heard of before, that there was not any woman, how noble, young, or faire soever shee was, but falling sicke, shee must of necessity have a man to attend her, were hee young or otherwise, respect of shame or modesty no way prevailing, but all parts of her body must be discovered to him, which (in the like urgency) was not to be seene by any but women: whereon ensued afterward, that upon the parties healing and recovery, it was the occasion of further dishonesty, which many being more modestly curious of, refused such disgracefull attending, chusing rather to die, then by such helpe to bee healed. In regard whereof, as well through the want of convenient remedies, (which the sicke by no meanes could attaine unto) as also the violence of the contagion, the multitude of them that died night and day, was so great, that it was a dreadfull sight to behold, and as much to heare spoken of. So that meere necessity (among them that remained living) begat new behaviours, quite contrary to all which had beene in former times, and frequently used among the City Inhabitants.

The custome of precedent dayes (as now againe it is) was, that women, kinred, neighbours, and friends, would meete together at the deceased parties house, and there, with them that were of neerest alliance, expresse their hearts sorrow for their friends losse. If not thus, they would assemble before the doore, with many of the best Cittizens and kindred, and (according to the quality of the deceased) the Cleargy met there likewise, and the dead body was carried (in comely manner) on mens shoulders, with funerall pompe of Torch light, and singing, to the Church appointed by the deceased. But these seemely orders, after that the fury of the pestilence began to encrease, they in like manner altogether ceased, and other new customes came in their place; because not onely people died, without having any women about them, but infinites also past out of this life, not having any witnesse, how, when, or in what manner they departed. So that few or none there were, to deliver outward shew of sorrow and grieving: but insteed thereof, divers declared idle joy and rejoycing, a use soone learned of immodest women, having put off all feminine compassion, yea, or regard of their owne welfare.

Very few also would accompany the body to the grave, and they not any of the Neighbours, although it had beene an honourable Citizen, but onely the meanest kinde of people, such as were grave-makers, coffin-bearers, or the like, that did these services onely for money, and the beere being mounted on their shoulders, in all hast they would runne away with it, not perhaps to the Church appointed by the dead, but to the neerest at hand, having some foure or sixe poore Priests following, with lights or no lights, and those of the silliest; short service being said at the buriall, and the body unreverently throwne into the first open grave they found. Such was the pittifull misery of poore people, and divers, who were of better condition, as it was most lamentable to behold; because the greater number of them, under hope of healing, or compelled by poverty, kept still within their house weake and faint, thousands falling sicke daily, and having no helpe, or being succoured any way with foode or physicke, all of them died, few or none escaping.

Great store there were, that died in the streetes by day or night, and many more beside, although they died in their houses; yet first they made it knowne to their neighbours, that their lives perished, rather by the noysome smell of dead and putrified bodies, then by any violence of the disease in themselves. So that of these and the rest, dying in this manner every where, the neighbours observed one course of behaviour, (moved thereto no lesse by feare, that the smell and corruption of dead bodies should harme them, then charitable respect of the dead) that themselves when they could, or being assisted by some bearers of coarses, when they were able to procure them, would hale the bodies (already dead) out of their houses, laying them before their doores, where such as passed by, especially in the mornings, might see them lying in no meane numbers. Afterward, Bieres were brought thither, and such as might not have the helpe of Bieres, were glad to lay them on tables; and Bieres have bin observed, not onely to be charged with two or three dead bodies at once, but many times it was seene also, that the wife with the husband, two or three Brethren together; yea, the Father and the Mother, have thus beene carried along to the grave upon one Biere.

Moreover, oftentimes it hath beene seene, that when two Priests went with one Crosse to fetch the body; there would follow (behind) three or foure bearers with their Bieres, and when the Priests intended the buriall but of one body, sixe or eight more have made up the advantage, and yet none of them being attended by any seemly company, lights, teares, or the very least decencie, but it plainly appeared, that the very like account was then made of Men or Women, as if they had bene Dogges or Swine. Wherein might manifestly bee noted, that that which the naturall course of things could not shew to the wise, with rare and little losse, to wit, the patient support of miseries and misfortunes, even in their greatest height: not onely the wise might now learne, but also the very simplest people; and in such sort, that they should alwaies bee prepared against all infelicities whatsoever.

Hallowed ground could not now suffice, for the great multitude of dead bodies, which were daily brought to every Church in the City, and every houre in the day; neither could the bodies have proper place of buriall, according to our ancient custome: wherefore, after that the Churches and Church-yards were filled, they were constrained to make use of great deepe ditches, wherein they were buried by hundreds at once, ranking dead bodies along in graves, as Merchandizes are laide along in ships, covering each after other with a small quantity of earth, and so they filled at last up the whole ditch to the brim.

Now, because I would wander no further in everie particularity, concerning the miseries happening in our Citie: I tell you, that extremities running on in such manner as you have heard, little lesse spare was made in the Villages round about; wherein (setting aside enclosed Castles which were now filled like to small Cities) poore Labourers and Husband-men, with their whole Families, dyed most miserably in outhouses, yea, and in the open fieldes also; without any assistance of physicke, or helpe of servants; and likewise in the high-wayes, or their ploughed landes, by day or night indifferently, yet not as men, but like brute beasts.

By meanes whereof, they became lazie and slothfull in their dayly endevours, even like to our Citizens; not minding or medling with their wonted affaires: but, as a waiting for death every houre, imployed all their paines, not in caring any way for themselves, their cattle, or gathering the fruits of the earth, or any of their accustomed labours; but rather wasted and consumed, even such as were for their instant sustenance. Whereupon, it fell so out, that their Oxen, Asses, Sheepe, and Goates, their Swine, Pullen, yea their verie Dogges, the truest and faithfullest servants to men, being beaten and banished from their houses, went wildly wandring abroad in the fields, where the Corne grew still on the ground without gathering, or being so much as reapt or cut. Many of the foresaid beasts (as endued with reason) after they had pastured themselves in the day time, would returne full fed at night home to their houses, without any government of Heardsmen, or any other.

How many faire Palaces! How many goodly Houses! How many noble habitations, filled before with families of Lords and Ladies, were then to be seene emptie, without any one there dwelling, except some silly servant? How many Kindreds, worthy of memory! How many great inheritances! And what plenty of riches; were left without any true successours? How many good men! How many woorthy Women! How many valiant and comely young men, whom none but Galen, Hippocrates, and Æsculapius (if they were living) could have bene reputed any way unhealthfull; were seene to dine at morning with their Parents, Friends, and familiar confederates, and went to sup in another world with their Predecessors?

It is no meane breach to my braine, to make repetition of so many miseries; wherefore, being willing to part with them as easily as I may: I say that our Citie being in this case, voide of inhabitants, it came to passe (as afterward I understoode by some of good credite) that in the venerable Church of S. Marie la Neufue, on a Tuesday morning, there being then no other person, after the hearing of divine Service, in mourning habits (as the season required) returned thence seven discrete young Gentlewomen, all allyed together, either by friendship, neighbor-hood, or parentage. She among them that was most entred into yeares, exceeded not eight and twenty; and the yongest was no lesse then eighteene; being of Noble descent, faire forme, adorned with exquisite behaviour, and gracious modesty.

Their names I could report, if just occasion did not forbid it, in regard of the occasions following by them related, and because times heereafter shall not taxe them with reproofe; the lawes of pleasure being more straited now adayes (for the matters before revealed) then at that time they were, not onely to their yeares but to many much riper. Neither will I likewise minister matter to rash heades (over-readie in censuring commendable life) any way to impaire the honestie of Ladies, by their idle detracting speeches. And therefore, to the end that what each of them saith, may be comprehended without confusion; I purpose to stile them by names, wholly agreeing, or (in part) conformable to their qualities. The first and most aged, we will name Pampinea; the second Fiametta; the third Philamena; the fourth Æmilia; the fift Lauretta; the sixt Neiphila; and the last we terme (not without occasion) Elissa, or Eliza. All of them being assembled at a corner of the Church, not by any deliberation formerly appointed, but meerely by accident, and sitting as it were in a round ring: after divers sighs severelly delivered, they conferred on sundry matters answerable to the sad qualitie of the time, and within a while after, Madam Pampinea began in this manner.

Faire Ladies, you may (no doubt as well as I) have often heard, that no injury is offered to any one, by such as make use but of their owne right. It is a thing naturall for everie one which is borne in this World, to aide, conserve, and defend her life so long as shee can; and this right hath bene so powerfully permitted, that although it hath sometimes happened, that (to defend themselves) men have beene slaine without any offence: yet Lawes have allowed it to be so, in whose solicitude lieth the best living of all mortals. How much more honest and just is it then for us, and for every other well-disposed person, to seeke for (without wronging any) and to practise all remedies that wee can, for the conservation of our lives? When I well consider, what we have heere done this morning, and many other already past (remembring (withall) what likewise is proper and convenient for us:) I conceive (as all you may do the like) that everie one of us hath a due respect of her selfe, and then I mervaile not, but rather am much amazed (knowing none of us to be deprived of a Womans best judgement) that wee seeke not after some remedies for our selves, against that, which everie one among us, ought (in reason) to feare.

Heere we meete and remaine (as it seemeth to mee) in no other manner, then as if we would or should be witnesses, to all the dead bodies at rest in their grave; or else to listen, when the religious Sisters heere dwelling (whose number now are well-neere come to bee none at all) sing Service at such houres as they ought to doe; or else to acquaint all commers hither (by our mourning habits) with the quality and quantitie of our hearts miseries. And when we part hence, we meete with none but dead bodies; or sicke persons transported from one place to another; or else we see running thorow the City (in most offensive fury) such as (by authoritie of publike Lawes) were banished hence, onely for their bad and brutish behaviour in contempt of those Lawes, because now they know, that the executors of them are dead and sicke. And if not these, more lamentable spectacles present themselves to us, by the base rascality of the City; who being fatted with our blood, tearme themselves Grave-makers, and in meere contemptible mockeries of us, are mounted on horsebacke, gallopping every where, reproaching us with our losses and misfortunes, with lewd and dishonest songs: so that we can heare nothing else but such and such are dead, and such and such lie a dying: here hands wringing, and every where most pittifull complaining.

If we returne home to our houses (I know not whether your case be answerable to mine) when I can finde none of all my Family, but onely my poore waiting Chamber-maide; so great are my feares, that the very haire on my head declareth my amazement, and wheresoever I go or sit downe, methinkes I see the ghostes and shadowes of deceased friends, not with such lovely lookes as I was wont to behold them, but with most horrid and dreadfull regards, newly stolne upon them I know not how. In these respects, both heere, else-where, and at home in my house, methinkes I am alwaies ill, and much more (in mine owne opinion) then any other body, not having meanes or place of retirement, as all we have, and none to remaine heere but onely we.

Moreover, I have often heard it said, that in tarrying or departing, no distinction is made in things honest or dishonest; onely appetite will be served; and be they alone or in company, by day or night, they do whatsoever their appetite desireth: not secular persons onely, but such as are recluses, and shut up within Monasteries, breaking the Lawes of obedience, and being addicted to pleasures of the flesh, are become lascivious and dissolute, making the world beleeve, that whatsoever is convenient for other women, is no way unbeseeming them, as thinking in that manner to escape.

If it be so, as manifestly it maketh shew of it selfe; What do we here? What stay we for? And whereon do we dreame? Why are we more respectlesse of our health, then all the rest of the Citizens? Repute we our selves lesse precious then all the other? Or do we beleeve, that life is linked to our bodies with stronger chaines, then to others, and that therefore we should not feare any thing that hath power to offend us? Wee erre therein, and are deceived. What brutishnesse were it in us, if we should urge any such beleefe? So often as we call to minde, what and how many gallant yong men and women, have beene devoured by this cruell pestilence; we may evidently observe a contrary argument.

Wherefore, to the end, that by being over-scrupulous and carelesse, we fall not into such danger, whence when we would (perhaps) we cannot recover our selves by any meanes: I thinke it meete (if your judgement therein shall jumpe with mine) that all of us as we are (at least, if we will doe as divers before us have done, and yet daily endeavour to doe) shunning death by the honest example of other, make our retreate to our Country houses, wherewith all of us are sufficiently furnished, and there to delight our selves as best we may, yet without transgressing (in any act) the limits of reason. There shall we heare the pretty birds sweetly singing, see the hilles and plaines verdantly flouring; the Corne waving in the field like the billowes of the Sea, infinite store of goodly trees, and the Heavens more fairely open to us, then here we can behold them. And although they are justly displeased, yet will they not there deny us better beauties to gaze on, then the walles in our City (emptied of Inhabitants) can affoord us.

Moreover, the Ayre is much fresh and cleere, and generally, there is farre greater abundance of all things whatsoever, needefull at this time for preservation of our health, and lesse offence or mollestation then we find here.

And although Country people die, as well as heere our Citizens doe, the griefe notwithstanding is so much the lesse, as the houses and dwellers there are rare, in comparison of them in our City. And beside, if we well observe it, here we forsake no particular person, but rather we may tearme our selves forsaken; in regard that our Husbands, Kinred, and Friends, either dying, or flying from the dead, have left us alone in this great affliction, even as if we were no way belonging unto them. And therefore, by following this counsell, we cannot fall into any reprehension; whereas if we neglect and refuse it, danger, distresse, and death (perhaps) may ensue thereon.

Wherefore, if you thinke good, I would allow it for well done, to take our waiting women, with all such things as are needfull for us, and (as this day) betake our selves to one place, to morrow to another, taking there such pleasure and recreation, as so sweete a season liberally bestoweth on us. In which manner we may remaine, till we see (if death otherwise prevent us not) what end the gracious Heavens have reserved for us. I would have you also to consider, that it is no lesse seemely for us to part hence honestly, then a great number of other Women to remaine here immodestly.

The other Ladies and Gentlewomen, having heard Madam Pampinea, not onely commended her counsell, but desiring also to put it in execution; had already particularly consulted with themselves, by what meanes they might instantly depart from thence. Neverthelesse, Madam Philomena, who was very wise, spake thus.

Albeit faire Ladies, the case propounded by Madam Pampinea hath beene very well delivered; yet (for all that) it is against reason for us to rush on, as we are overready to doe. Remember that we are all women, and no one among us is so childish, but may consider, that when wee shall be so assembled together, without providence or conduct of some man, we can hardly governe our selves. Wee are fraile, offensive, suspitious, weake spirited, and fearefull: in regard of which imperfections, I greatly doubt (if we have no better direction then our owne) this society will sooner dissolve it selfe, and (perchance) with lesse honour to us, then if we never had begunne it. And therefore it shall bee expedient for us, to provide before we proceede any further. Madam Eliza hereon thus replyed.

Most true it is, that men are the chiefe or head of women, and without their order, sildome times do any matters of ours sort to recommendable end. But what meanes shal we make for men? We all know well enough, that the most part of our friends are dead, and such as are living, some be dispersed heere, others there, into divers places and companies, where we have no knowledge of their being; and to accept of strangers, would seeme very inconvenient: wherefore as we have such care of our health, so should we bee as respective withall, in ordering our intention, that wheresoever we ayme at our pleasure and contentment, reproofe and scandall may by no meanes pursue us.

While this discourse thus held among the Ladies, three young Gentlemen came foorth of the Church (yet not so young, but the youngest had attained to five and twenty yeares:) in whom neyther malice of the time, losse of friends or kindred, nor any fearefull conceit in themselves, had the power to quench affection, but (perhaps) might a little coole it, in regard of the queazie season. One of them called himselfe Pamphilus, the second Philostratus, and the last Dioneus. Each of them was very affable and well conditioned, and walked abroad (for their greater comfort in such a time of tribulation) to try if they could meete with their fayre friends, who (happily) might all three be among these seaven, and the rest kinne unto them in one degree or other. No sooner were these Ladies espyed by them, but they met with them also in the same advantage; whereupon Madam Pampinea (amiably smiling) said.

See how graciously Fortune is favourable to our beginning, by presenting our eyes with three so wise and worthy young Gentlemen, who will gladly be our guides and servants, if wee doe not disdaine them the office. Madam Neiphila began immediatly to blush, because one of them had a Love in the company, and said; Good Madam Pampinea take heed what you say, because (of mine owne knowledge) nothing can be spoken but good of them all; and I thinke them all to be absolutely sufficient for a farre greater employment then is here intended: as being well worthy to keepe company not onely with us, but them of more faire and precious esteeme then we are. But because it appeareth plainly enough, that they beare affection to some heere among us, I feare, if wee should make the motion, that some dishonor or reproofe may ensue thereby, and yet without blame either in us or them. That is nothing at all, answered Madam Philomena, let me live honestly, and my Conscience not checke me with any crime; speake then who can to the contrary, God and truth shall enter armes for me. I wish that they were as willing to come, as all we are to bid them welcome: for truly (as Madam Pampinea saide) we may very well hope, that Fortune will bee furtherous to our purposed journey.

The other Ladies hearing them speake in such manner, not only were silent to themselves, but all with one accord and consent said, that it were well done to call them, and to acquaint them with their intention, entreating their company in so pleasant a voyage. Whereupon, without any more words, Madam Pampinea mounting on her feete (because one of the three was her Kinsman) went towards them, as they stood respectively observing them; and (with a pleasing countenance) giving them a gracious salutation, declared to them their deliberation, desiring (in behalfe of all the rest) that with a brotherly and modest mind, they would vouchsafe to beare them company.

The Gentlemen imagined at the first apprehension, that this was spoken in mockage of them; but when they better perceived that her words tended to solemne earnest, they made answer, That they were all hartily ready to doe them any service. And without any further delaying, before they departed thence, took order for their aptest furnishing with all convenient necessaries, and sent word to the place of their first appointment. On the morrow, being Wednesday, about breake of day, the Ladies, with certaine of their attending Gentlewomen, and the three Gentlemen, having three servants to waite on them, left the Citie to beginne their journey; and having travelled about a leagues distance, arrived at the place of their first purpose of stay, which was seated on a little hill, distant (on all sides) from any high way, plentifully stored with faire spreading Trees, affoording no meane delight to the eye. On the top of all, stood a stately Palace, having a large and spacious Court in the middest round engirt with Galleries, Hals, and Chambers, every one separate alone by themselves, and beautified with Pictures of admirable cunning. Nor was there any want of Gardens, Meadowes, and other most pleasant Walkes, with Welles and Springs of faire running waters, all encompassed with branching Vines, fitter for curious and quaffing bibbers, then women sober, and singularly modest.

This Pallace the company found fully fitted and prepared, the beddes in the Chambers made and daintily ordred, thickly strewed with variety of flowers, which could not but give them the greater contentment. Dioneus, who (above the other) was a pleasant young gallant, and full of infinite witty conceits, saide; Your wit (faire Ladies) hath better guided us hither, then our providence: I know not how you have determined to dispose of your cares; as for mine owne, I left them at the Cittie gate, when I came thence with you: and therefore let your resolution bee, to spend the time here in smiles and singing, (I meane, as may fittest agree with your dignity) or else give me leave to go seeke my sorrowes againe, and so to remaine discontented in our desolate City. Madam Pampinea having in like manner shaken off her sorrowes, delivering a modest and bashfull smile, replyed in this manner.

Dioneus, well have you spoken, it is fit to live merrily, and no other occasion made us forsake the sicke and sad Cittie. But, because such things as are without meane or measure, are subject to no long continuance: I, who began the motion, whereby this societie is thus assembled, and ayme at the long lasting thereof, doe hold it verie convenient, that wee should all agree, to have one chiefe Commander among us, in whom the care and providence should consist, for direction of our merriment, performing honour and obedience to the partie, as to our Patrone and sole Governour. And because every one may feele the burthen of solicitude, as also the pleasure of commanding, and consequently have a sensible taste of both, whereby no envy may arise on any side, I could wish, that each one of us (for a day onely) should feele both the burthen and honour, and the person so to be advanced, shall receive it from the election of us all. As for such as are to succeed, after him or her that hath had the dayes of dominion, the party thought fit for succession, must be named so soone as night approacheth. And being in this eminency (according as he or she shall please) he may order and dispose how long the time of his rule shall last, as also of the place and maner, where best we may continue our delight.

These words were highly pleasing to them all, and by generall voice, Madame Pampinea was chosen Queene for the first day. Whereupon, Madame Philomena ranne presently to a Bay-tree, because she had often heard what honor belonged to those branches, and how worthy of honour they were, that rightfully were crowned with them, plucking off divers branches, shee made of them an apparant and honourable Chaplet, placing it (by generall consent) upon her head; and this so long as their company continued, manifested to all the rest, the signall of Dominion, and Royall greatnesse.

After that Madame Pampinea was thus made Queen, she commanded publique silence, and causing the Gentlemens three servants, and the wayting women also (being foure in number) to be brought before her, thus she beganne. Because I am to give the first example to you all, whereby proceeding on from good to better, our company may live in order and pleasure, acceptable to all, and without shame to any; I create Parmeno (servant to Dioneus) Maister of the Houshold, hee taking the care and charge of all our Trayne, and for whatsoever appertayneth to our Hall service. I appoint also, that Silisco servant to Pamphilus, shall bee our Dispenser and Treasurer, performing that which Parmeno shal command him. Likewise that Tindaro serve as Groome of the Chamber, to Philostratus his Master, and the other two, when his fellowes impeached by their offices, cannot be present. Misia my Chambermaid, and Licisca belonging to Philomena, shall serve continually in the Kitchin, and diligently make ready such Vyands, as shal be delivered them by Parmeno. Chimera, waitingwoman to Lauretta, and Stratilia appertaining to Fiammetta, shall have the charge and governement of the Ladies Chambers, and preparing all places where we shall be present. Moreover, we will and commaund everie one of them (as they desire to deserve our grace) that wheresoever they goe or come, or whatsoever they heare or see: they especially respect to bring us tydings of them. After shee had summarily delivered them these orders, very much commended of everie one, she arose fairely, saying: Heere we have Gardens, Orchardes, Medowes, and other places of sufficient pleasure, where every one may sport and recreate themselves: but so soone as the ninth houre striketh, then all to meet here againe, to dine in the coole shade.

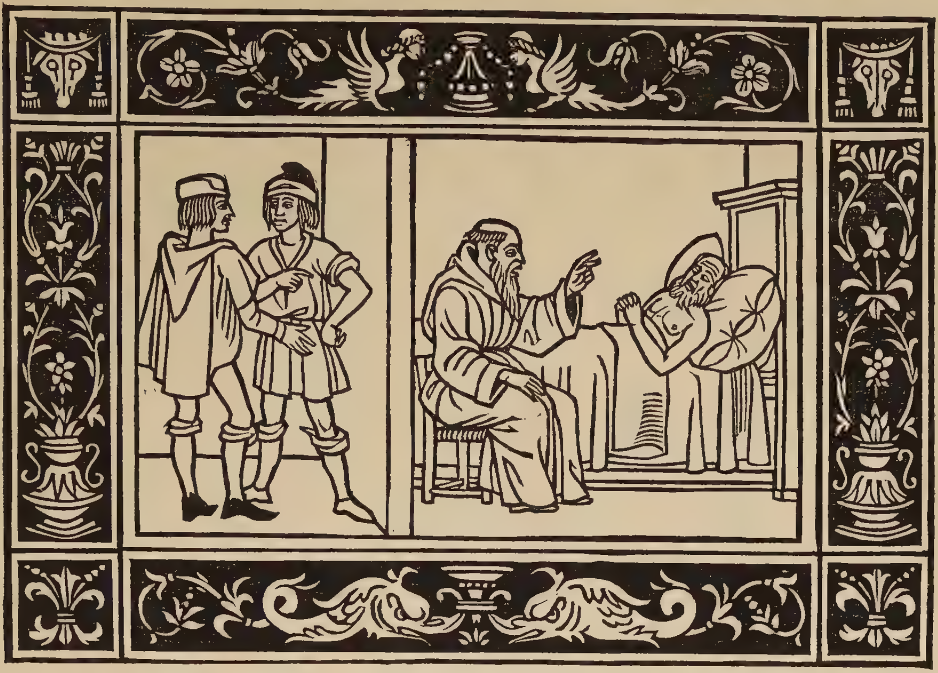
This jocund company having received licence from their Queene to disport themselves, the Gentlemen walked with the Ladies into a goodly Garden, making Chaplets and Nosegayes of divers flowers, and singing silently to themselves. When they had spent the time limitted by the Queene, they returned into the house, where they found that Parmeno had effectually executed his office. For, when they entred into the hall, they saw the Tables covered with delicate white Napery, and the glasses looking like silver, they were so transparantly cleere, all the roome beside strewed with Flowers of Juniper. When the Queen and all the rest had washed, according as Parmeno gave order, so every one was seated at the Table: the Viands (delicately drest) were served in, and excellent wines plentifully delivered, none attending but the three servants, and little or no lowd Table-talke passing among them.

Dinner being ended, and the Tables withdrawne (all the Ladies, and the Gentlemen likewise, being skilfull both in singing and dancing, and playing on instruments artificially) the Queene commanded, that divers Instruments should be brought, and (as she gave charge) Dioneus tooke a Lute, and Fiammetta a Violl de gamba, and began to play an excellent daunce. Whereupon, the Queene with the rest of the Ladies, and the other two young Gentlemen (having sent their attending servants to dinner) paced foorth a daunce very majestically. And when the dance was ended, they sung sundry excellent Canzonets, outwearing so the time, untill the Queene commanded them all to rest, because the houre did necessarily require it. The Gentlemen having their Chambers farre severed from the Ladies, curiously strewed with flowers, and their beds adorned in exquisite manner, as those of the Ladies were not a jotte inferiour to them; the silence of the night bestowed sweet rest on them al. In the morning, the Queene and all the rest being risen, accounting over much sleepe to be very hurtfull, they walked abroad into a goodly Meadow, where the grasse grew verdantly, and the beames of the Sun heated not over-violently, because the shades of faire spreading Trees, gave a temperate calmnesse, coole and gentle winds fanning their sweet breath pleasingly among them. All of them being there set downe in a round ring, and the Queen in the middest, as being the appointed place of eminency, she spake:

You see (faire company) that the Sunne is highly mounted, the heate (elsewhere) too extreme for us, and therefore here is our fittest refuge, the ayre being so coole, delicate, and acceptable, and our folly well worthy reprehension, if we should walke further, and speede worse. Heere are Tables, Cards, and Chesse, as your dispositions may bee addicted. But if mine advice might passe for currant, I would admit none of those exercises, because they are too troublesome both to them that play, and such as looke on. I could rather wish, that some quaint discourse might passe among us, a tale or fable related by some one, to urge the attention of all the rest. And so wearing out the warmth of the day, one prety Novell will draw on another, untill the Sun be lower declined, and the heates extremity more diminished, to solace our selves in some other place, as to our minds shall seeme convenient. If therefore what I have sayde bee acceptable to you (I purposing to follow in the same course of pleasure,) let it appeare by your immediate answere; for, till the Evening, I thinke we can devise no exercise more commodious for us.

The Ladies and Gentlemen allowed of the motion, to spend the time in telling pleasant tales; whereupon the Queene saide: Seeing you have approved mine advice, I grant free permission for this first day, that every one shall relate, what to him or her is best pleasing. And turning her selfe to Pamphilus (who was seated on her right hand) gave him favour, with one of his Novels, to begin the recreation: which he not daring to deny, and perceiving generall attention prepared for him, thus he began.

THE FIRST DAY, THE FIRST NOVELL



WHEREIN IS CONTAINED, HOW HARD A THING IT IS, TO DISTINGUISH GOODNESSE FROM HYPOCRISIE; AND HOW (UNDER THE SHADOW OF HOLINESSE) THE WICKEDNESSE OF ONE MAN, MAY DECEIVE MANY.

Messire *Chappelet du Prat, by making a false confession, beguyled an holy Religious man, and after dyed. And having (during his life time) bene a very bad man, at his death, was reputed for a saint, and called S. Chappelet.*

It is a matter most convenient (deare Ladies) that a man ought to begin whatsoever he doth, in the great and glorious name of him, who was the Creator of all things. Wherefore, seeing that I am the man appointed, to begin this your invention of discoursing Novelties: I intend to begin also with one of his wonderfull workes. To the end, that this being heard, our hope may remaine on him, as the thing onely permanent, and his name for ever to be praised by us. Now, as there is nothing more certaine, but that even as temporall things are mortall and transitory, so are they both in and out of themselves, full of sorrow, paine, and anguish, and subjected to infinite dangers: So in the same manner, we live mingled among them, seeming as part of them, and cannot (without some error) continue or defend our selves, if God by his especiall grace and favour, give us not strength and good understanding. Which power we may not beleeve, that either it descendeth to us, or liveth in us, by any merites of our owne; but of his onely most gracious benignity. Mooved neverthelesse and entreated by the intercessions of them, who were (as we are) mortals; and having diligently observed his commandements, are now with him in eternall blessednes. To whom (as to advocates and procurators, informed by the experience of our frailty) wee are not to present our prayers in the presence of so great a Judge; but onely to himselfe, for the obtaining of all such things as his wisedome knoweth to be most expedient for us. And well may we credit, that his goodnesse is more fully enclined towards us, in his continuall bounty and liberality; then the subtilty of mortall eye, can reach into the secret of so divine a thought: and sometimes therefore we may be beguiled in opinion, by electing such and such as our intercessors before his high Majesty, who perhaps are farre off from him, or driven into perpetuall exile, as unworthy to appeare in so glorious a presence. For he, from whom nothing can be hidden, more regardeth the sincerity of him that prayeth, then ignorant devotion, committed to the trust of a heedlesse intercessor; and such prayers have alwaies gracious acceptation in his sight. As manifestly will appeare, by the Novell which I intend to relate; manifestly (I say) not as in the judgement of God, but according to the apprehension of men.

There was one named, Musciatto Francesi, who from beeing a most rich and great Merchant in France, was become a Knight, and preparing to goe into Tuscany, with Mounsieur Charles without Land, Brother to the King of France (who was desired and incited to come thither by Pope Boniface) found his affaires greatly intricated heere and there (as oftentimes the matters of Merchants fall out to bee) and that very hardly hee should sodainly unintangle them, without referring the charge of them to divers persons. And for all he tooke indifferent good order, onely he remained doubtfull, whom he might sufficiently leave, to recover his debts among many Burgundians. And the rather was his care the more heerein, because he knew the Burgundians to be people of badde nature, rioters, brablers, full of calumny, and without any faithfulnesse: so that he could not bethinke himselfe of any man (how wicked soever he was) in whom he might repose trust to meete with their lewdnesse. Having a long while examined his thoughts upon this point, at last hee remembred one Master Chappelet du Prat, who ofttimes had resorted to his house in Paris. And because he was a man of little stature, yet handsome enough, the French not knowing what this word Chappelet might meane, esteeming he should be called rather (in their tongue) Chappell; imagined, that in regard of his small stature, they termed him Chappelet, and not Chappell, and so by the name of Chappelet he was every where known, and by few or none acknowledged for Chappell.

This Master Chappelet, was of so good and commendable life; that, being a Notarie, he held it in high disdaine, that any of his Contractes (although he made but few) should be found without falshoode. And looke how many soever hee dealt withall, he would be urged and required thereto, offering them his paines and travaile for nothing, but to bee requited otherwise then by money; which prooved to bee his much larger recompencing, and returned to him the farre greater benefit. Hee tooke the onely pleasure of the world, to beare false witnesse, if hee were thereto entreated, and (oftentimes) when hee was not requested at all. Likewise because in those times, great trust and beleefe was given to an oath, he making no care or conscience to be perjured: greatly advantaged himselfe by Law suites, in regard that many matters relyed upon his oath, and delivering the truth according to his knowledge.

He delighted (beyond measure) and addicted his best studies, to cause enmities and scandals betweene kindred and friends, or any other persons, agreeing well together; and the more mischiefe he could procure in this kind, so much the more pleasure and delight tooke he therein. If he were called to kill any one, or to do any other villanous deede, he never would make deniall, but go to it very willingly; and divers times it was well knowen, that many were cruelly beaten, ye slaine by his hands. Hee was a most horrible blasphemer of God and his Saints, upon the very least occasion, as being more addicted to choller, then any other man could be. Never would he frequent the Church, but basely contemned it, with the Sacraments and religious rites therein administred, accounting them for vile and unprofitable things: but very voluntarily would visit Tavernes, and other places of dishonest accesse, which were continually pleasing unto him, to satisfie his lust and inordinate lubricitie. Hee would steale both in publike and private, even with such a conscience, as if it were given to him by nature so to do. He was a great glutton and a drunkarde, even till he was not able to take any more: being also a continuall gamester, and carrier of false Dice, to cheate with them the very best Friends he had.

But why do I waste time in such extent of words? When it may suffice to say, that never was there a worse man borne; whose wickednesse was for long time supported, by the favour, power, and Authoritie of Monsieur Musciatto, for whose sake many wrongs and injuries were patiently endured, as well by private persons (whom hee would abuse notoriously) as others of the Court, betweene whom he made no difference at all in his vile dealing. This Master Chappelet, being thus remembred by Musciatto (who very well knew his life and behaviour) he perfectly perswaded himselfe, that this was a man apt in all respects, to meete with the treachery of the Burgundians: whereupon, having sent for him, thus he beganne.

Chappelet, thou knowest how I am wholly to retreate my selfe from hence, and having some affaires among the Burgundians, men full of wickednesse and deceite; I can bethinke my selfe of no meeter a man then Chappelet, to recover such debts as are due to mee among them. And because it falleth out so well, that thou art not now hindered by any other businesse; if thou wilt undergoe this office for me, I will procure thee favourable Letters from the Court, and give thee a reasonable portion in all thou recoverest. Master Chappelet, seeing himselfe idle, and greedy after worldly goods, considering that Mounsieur Musciatto (who had beene alwayes his best buckler) was now to depart from thence, without any dreaming on the matter, and constrained thereto (as it were) by necessity, set downe his resolution, and answered, that hee would gladly doe it.

Having made their agreement together, and received from Musciatto his expresse procuration, and also the Kings gracious Letters; after that Musciatto was gone on his journey, Master Chappelet went to Dijon, where he was unknowne (well-neere) of any. And there (quite from his naturall disposition) he beganne benignely and graciously, in recovering the debts due; which course he tooke the rather, because they should have a further feeling of him in the end. Being lodged in the house of two Florentine brethren, that living on their monies usance; and (for Mounsieur Musciattoes sake) using him with honour and respect: it fortuned that he fell sicke, and the two brethren sent for Physitions to attend him, allowing their servants to be diligent about him, making no spare of any thing, which gave the best likelyhood of restoring his health. But all their paines proved to no purpose, because he (honest man) being now growne aged, and having lived all his life time very disorderly, fell day by day (according to the Physicions judgement) from bad to worse, as no other way appeared but death, whereat the brethren greatly grieved.

Upon a day, neere to the Chamber where the sicke man lay, they entred into this communication. What shall we doe (quoth the one to the other) with this man? We are much hindered by him: for to send him away (sicke as he is) we shall be greatly blamed thereby, and it will be a manifest note of our weake wisedome; the people knowing that first of all we gave him entertainement, and have allowed him honest physicall attendance, and he not having any way injuried or offended us, to let him be suddenly expulsed our house (sicke to death as he is) it can be no way for our credit.

On the other side, we are to consider also, that hee hath bin so badde a man, as he will not now make any confession thereof, neither receive the blessed Sacrament of the Church, and dying so without confession; there is no Church that will accept his body, but it must be buried in prophane ground, like to a Dogge. And yet if hee would confesse himselfe, his sinnes are so many and monstrous, as the like case also may happen, because there is not any Priest or Religious person, that can or will absolve him. And being not absolved, he must be cast into some ditch or pit, and then the people of the Towne, as well in regard of the account we carry heere, (which to them appeareth so little pleasing, as we are daily pursued with their worst words) as also coveting our spoile and overthrow, upon this accident will cry out and mutiny against us; *Behold these Lombard dogs, which are not to be received into the Church, why should we suffer them to live heere among us?* In furious madnesse will they come upon us, and our house, where (peradventure) not contended with robbing us of our goods, our lives will remaine in their mercy and danger; so that, in what sort soever it happen, this mans dying here, must needs be banefull to us.

Master Chappelet, who (as we have formerly saide) was lodged neere to the place where they thus conferred, having a subtle attention (as oftentimes we see sicke persons to be possessed withall) heard all these speeches spoken of him, and causing them to bee called unto him, thus hee spake.

I would not have you to be any way doubtfull of me; neither that you should receive the least damage by me: I have heard what you have said, and am certaine, that it will happen according to your words, if matters should fall out as you conceite; but I am minded to deale otherwise. I have committed so many offences against our Lord God, in the whole current of my life; that now I intend one action at the houre of my death, which I trust will make amends for all. Procure therefore, I pray you, that the most holy and religious man that is to be found (if there bee any one at all) may come unto me, and referre the case then to me, for I will deale in such sort for you and my selfe, that all shall be well, and you no way discontented.

The two Brethren, although they had no great hope in his speeches, went yet to a Monastery of Gray-Friars, and requested; that some one holy and learned man, might come to heare the confession of a Lombard, that lay very weake and sicke in their house. And one was granted unto them, being an aged religious Frier, a great read master in the sacred Scripture, a very venerable person, who being of good and sanctified life, all the Citizens held him in great respect and esteeme, and on hee went with them to their house. When he was come up into the Chamber where Master Chappelet lay, and being there seated downe by him; he beganne first to comfort him very lovingly, demanding also of him, how many times he had bin at confession? Whereto Master Chappelet (who never had bin shrived in all his life time) thus replied.

Holy Father, I alwayes used (as a common custome) to bee confessed once (at the least) every weeke, albeit sometimes much more often; but true it is, that being falne into this sicknesse, now eight daies since I have not beene confest, so violent hath bene the extremity of my weaknesse. My sonne (answered the good old man) thou hast done well, and so keep thee still hereafter in that minde: but I plainly perceive, seeing thou hast so often confessed thy selfe, that I shall take the lesse labour in urging questions to thee.

Master Chappelet replyed; Say not so good Father, for albeit I have bene so oftentimes confessed, yet am I willing now to make a generall confession, even of all sinnes comming to my remembrance, from the very day of my birth, until this instant houre of my shrift. And therefore I entreat you (holy Father) to make a particular demand of everie thing, even as if I had never bene confessed at all, and to make no respect of my sicknesse: for I had rather be offensive to mine owne flesh, then by favoring or allowing it ease, to hazard the perdition of my soule, which my Redeemer bought with so precious a price.

These words were highly pleasing to the holy Friar, and seemed to him as an argument of a good conscience: Wherefore, after hee had much commended this forwardnesse in him, he began to demand of him if he had never offended with any Woman? Whereunto master Chappelet (breathing forth a great sigh) answered.

Holy Father, I am halfe ashamed to tell you the truth in this case, as fearing least I should sinne in vaine-glory. Whereto the Confessor replyed; Speake boldly sonne, and feare not, for in telling the truth, bee it in confession or otherwise, a man can never sinne. Then sayde Maister Chappelet, Father, seeing you give me so good an assurance, I will resolve you faithfully heerein. I am so true a Virgin-man in this matter, even as when I issued forth of my mothers Wombe. O sonne (quoth the Friar) how happy and blessed of God art thou? Well hast thou lived, and therein hast thou not meanly merited, having had so much libertie to doe the contrary if thou wouldest, wherein verie few of us can so answer for our selves.

Afterward, he demanded of him, how much displeasing to God hee had beene in the sinne of Gluttony? When (sighing againe greatly) hee answered: Too much, and too often, good Father. For, over and beside the Fasts of our Lent season, which everie yeare ought to bee duely observed by devout people, I brought my selfe to such a customarie use, that I could fast three dayes in every Weeke, with Bread and Water. But indeede (holy Father) I confesse, that I have drunke water with such a pleasing appetite and delight (especially in praying, or walking on pilgrimages) even as greedy drunkards doe, in drinking good Wine. And many times I have desired such Sallades of small hearbes, as Women do gather abroad in the open fields, and feeding onely upon them, without coveting after any other kinde of sustenance, hath seemed much more pleasing to me, then I thought to agree with the nature of Fasting, especially, when as it swerveth from devotion, or is not done as it ought to bee.

Sonne, Sonne, replied the Confessour, these sinnes are naturall, and very light, and therefore I would not have thee to charge thy conscience with them, more then is needfull. It happeneth to every man (how holy soever he be) that after he hath fasted overlong, feeding will be welcome to him, and drinking good drinke after his travaile. O Sir, (said Maister Chappelet) never tell me this to comfort me, for well you know, and I am not ignorant therein, that such things as are done for the service of God, ought all to be performed purely, and without any blemish of the minde; what otherwise is done, savoureth of sinne. The Friar being well contented with his words, said: It is not amisse that thou understandest it in this manner, and thy conscience thus purely cleared, is no little comfort to me. But tell me now concerning Avarice, hast thou sinned therein, by desiring more then was reasonable, or withholding from others, such things as thou oughtst not to detaine? Wherein Maister Chappelet answered. Good Father, I would not have you to imagine, because you see me lodged heere in the house of two Usurers, that therefore I am of any such disposition. No truely Sir, I came hither to no other end, but onely to chastise and admonish them in friendly manner, to clense their mindes from such abhominable profit: And assuredly, I should have prevailed therein, had not this violent sicknesse hindered mine intention. But understand (holy Father) that my parents left me a rich man, and immediatly after my Fathers death, the greater part of his goods I gave away for Gods sake, and then, to sustaine mine owne life, and to helpe the poore members of Jesus Christ, I betooke my selfe to a meane estate of Merchandise, desiring none other then honest gaine thereby, and evermore whatsoever benefit came to me; I imparted halfe thereof to the poore, converting mine owne small portion about my necessary affaires, which that other part would scarcely serve to supply: yet alwayes God gave thereto such a mercifull blessing, that my businesse dayly thrived more and more, arising still from good to better.

Well hast thou done therein good Sonne, said the Confessour: but how oftentimes hast thou beene angry? Oh Sir (said Maister Chappelet) therein I assure yee, I have often transgressed. And what man is able to forbeare it; beholding the dayly actions of men to be so dishonest? No care of keeping Gods Commandements, nor any feare of his dreadfull judgements. Many times in a day, I have rather wished my selfe dead then living, beholding youth pursuing idle vanities, to sweare and forsweare themselves, tipling in Tavernes, and never haunting Churches; but rather affecting the worlds follies, then any such duties as they owe to God. Alas Sonne (quoth the Friar) this is a good and holy anger, and I can impose no penance on thee for it. But tell me, hath not rage or furie at any time so over-ruled thee, as to commit murther or man-slaughter, or to speake evill of any man, or to doe any other such kinde of injurie? Oh Father (answered Maister Chappelet) you that seeme to be a man of God, how dare you use any such vile words? If I had had the very least thought, to doe any such act as you speake, doe you thinke that God would have suffered me to live? These are deeds of darknesse, fit for villaines and wicked livers, of which hellish crew, when at any time I have happened to meet with some one of them, I have said; Goe, God convert thee.

Worthy, and charitable words, replied the Friar: but tell me Sonne, Didst thou ever beare false witnes against any man, or hast spoken falsly, or taken ought from any one, contrary to the will of the owner? Yes indeed Father, said Maister Chappelet, I have spoken ill of another, because I have sometime seene one of my neighbors, who with no meane shame of the world, would do nothing else but beat his wife: and of him once I complained to the poore mans parents, saying, that he never did it but when he was overcome with drinke. Those were no ill words, quoth the Friar; but I remember you said, that you were a Merchant: Did you ever deceive any, as some Merchants use to doe? Truely Father, answered M. Chappelet, I thinke not any, except one man, who one day brought me money which he owed me for a certaine peece of cloath I sold him, and I put it into a purse without accounting it. About a moneth afterward, I found that there were foure small pence more then was due to mee: and never happening to meete with the man againe, after I had kept them the space of a whole yeare, I then gave them away unto foure poore people, for Gods sake.

A small matter, said the Friar, and truly payed backe againe to the owner, in bestowing them on the poore. Many other questions he demanded of him, whereto still he answered in the same manner. But before he proceeded to absolution, Master Chappelet spake thus: I have yet one sinne more, which I have not revealed to you: when being urged by the Friar to confesse it, he said. I remember, that I should afford one day in the weeke, to cleanse the house of my soule, for better entertainement to my Lord and Saviour, and yet I have done no such reverence to the Sunday or Sabbath, as I ought to have done. A small fault Sonne, replyed the Friar. O no (quoth Master Chappelet) doe not terme it a small fault, because Sunday being a holy day, is highly to be reverenced: for as on that day, our blessed Lord arose from death to life. But (quoth the Confessor) hast thou done nothing else on that day? Yes, said he, being forgetfull of my selfe, once I did spet in Gods Church. The Friar smiling, said: Alas Sonne, that is a matter of no moment; for wee that are Religious persons, doe use to spet there every day. The more is your shame, answered Master Chappelet, for no place ought to bee kept more pure and cleane then the sacred Temple, wherein our daily sacrifices are offered up to God.

In this manner he held on an houre and more, uttering the like transgressions as these; and at last began to sigh very passionately, and to shed a few teares, as one that was skilfull enough in such dissembling pranks: whereat the Confessor being much mooved, saide: Alas Sonne, what aylest thou? Oh Father (quoth Chappelet) there remaineth yet one sinne more upon my conscience, wherof I never at any time made confession, so shamefull it appeareth to mee to disclose it; and I am partly perswaded, that God will never pardon me for that sinne. How now Sonne? said the Friar, never say so; for if all the sinnes that ever were committed by men, or shall be committed so long as the World endureth, were onely in one man, and he repenting them, and being so contrite for them, as I see thou art; the grace and mercy of God is so great, that upon penitent confession, he will freely pardon him, and therefore spare not to speake it boldly. Alas Father (said Chappelet, still in pretended weeping) this sinne of mine is so great, that I can hardly beleeve (if your earnest prayers do not assist me) that ever I shall obtaine remission for it. Speake it Sonne, said the Friar, and feare not, I promise that I will pray to God for thee.

Master Chappelet still wept and sighed, and continued silent, notwithstanding all the Confessors comfortable perswasions; but after hee had helde him a long while in suspence, breathing forth a sighe, even as if his very heart would have broken, he saide; Holy Father, seeing you promise to pray to God for me, I will reveale it to you: Know then, that when I was a little boy, I did once curse my Mother; which he had no sooner spoken, but he wrung his hands, and greeved extraordinarily. Oh good Son, saide the Friar: doth that seeme so great a sinne to thee? Why, men doe daily blaspheme our Lord God, and yet neverthelesse, upon their hearty repentance, he is alwayes ready to forgive them; and wilt not thou beleeve to obtaine remission, for a sinne so ignorantly committed? Weepe no more deare Sonne, but comfort thy selfe and rest resolved, that if thou wert one of them, who nayled our blessed Saviour to his Crosse; yet being so truly repentant, as I see thou art, he would freely forgive thee. Say you so Father? quoth Chappelet. What mine owne deare Mother? that bare me in her wombe nine moneths, day and night, and afterwards fed me with her breasts a thousand times, can I be pardoned for cursing her? Oh no, it is too haynous a sinne, and except you pray to God very instantly for me, he will not forgive me.

When the religious man perceived, that nothing more was to bee confessed by Master Chappelet; he gave him absolution, and his owne benediction beside, reputing him to be a most holy man, as verily beleeving all that hee had said. And who would not have done the like, hearing a man to speake in this manner, and being upon the very point of death? Afterward, he saide unto him, Master Chappelet, by Gods grace you may be soone restored to health, but if it so come to passe, that God doe take your blessed and well disposed soule to his mercy, will it please you to have your body buried in our Convent? Whereto Master Chappelet answered; I thanke you Father for your good motion, and sorry should I be, if my friends did bury me any where else, because you have promised to pray to God for me; and beside, I have alwayes carried a religious devotion to your Order. Wherefore, I beseech you, so soone as you are come home to your Convent, prevaile so much by your good meanes, that the holy Eucharist, consecrated this morning on your high Altar, may be brought unto me: for although I confesse my selfe utterly unworthy, yet I purpose (by your reverend permission) to receive it, as also your holy and latest unction, to this ende, that having lived a greevous sinner, I may yet (at the last) die a Christian. These words were pleasing to the good olde man, and he caused every thing to be performed, according as Master Chappelet had requested.

The two Brethren, who much doubted the dissembling of Chappelet, being both in a small partition, which sundered the sicke mans Chamber from theirs, heard and understood the passage of all, betweene him and the ghostly Father, being many times scarcely able to refraine from laughter, at the fraudulent course of his confession. And often they said within themselves, What manner of man is this, whom neither age, sickenesse, nor terror of death so neere approaching, and sensible to his owne soule, nor that which is much more, God, before whose judgement he knowes not how soone he shall appeare, or else be sent to a more fearefull place; none of these can alter his wicked disposition, but that he will needes die according as he hath lived? Notwithstanding, seeing he had so ordered the matter, that he had buriall freely allowed him, they cared for no more.

After that Chappelet had received the Communion, and the other Ceremonies appointed for him; weakenesse encreasing on him more and more, the very same day of his goodly confession, he died (not long after) towards the evening. Whereupon the two Brethren tooke order, that all needefull things should be in a readinesse, to have him buried honourably; sending to acquaint the Fathers of the Convent therewith, that they might come to say their Vigilles, according to precedent custome, and then on the morrow to fetch the body. The honest Friar that had confessed him, hearing he was dead, went to the Prior of the Convent, and by sound of the house Bell, caused all the Brethren to assemble together, giving them credibly to understand, that Master Chappelet was a very holy man, as appeared by all the parts of his confession, and made no doubt, but that many miracles would be wrought by his sanctified body, perswading them to fetch it thither with all devoute solemnity and reverence: whereto the Prior, and all the credulous Brethren presently condiscended very gladly.

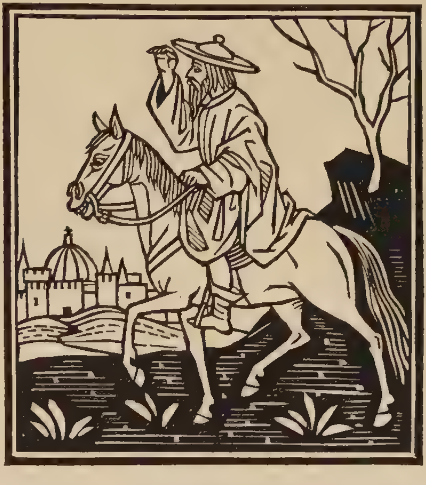
When night was come, they went all to visit the dead body of Master Chappelet, where they used an especiall and solemne Vigill; and on the morrow, apparelled in their richest Coapes and Vestiments, with bookes in their hands, and the Crosse borne before them, singing in the forme of a very devoute procession, they brought the body pompeously into their Church, accompanied with all the people of the Towne, both men and women. The Father Confessor, ascending up into the Pulpit, preached wonderfull things of him, and the rare holinesse of his life; his fastes, his virginity, simplicity, innocency, and true sanctity, recounting also (among other especiall observations) what Chappelet had confessed, as this most great and greevous sinne, and how hardly he could be perswaded, that God would grant him pardon for it. Whereby he tooke occasion to reprove the people then present, saying; And you (accursed of God) for the verie least and trifling matter hapning, will not spare to blaspheme God, his blessed Mother, and the whole Court of heavenly Paradise: Oh, take example by this singular man, this Saint-like man, nay, a very Saint indeede.

Many additions more he made, concerning his faithfulnesse, truth, and integrity; so that, by the vehement asseveration of his words (whereto all the people there present gave credible beleefe) he provoked them unto such zeale and earnest devotion; that the Sermon was no sooner ended, but (in mighty crowds and throngs) they pressed about the Biere, kissing his hands and feete, and all the garments about him were torne in peeces, as precious Reliques of so holy a person, and happy they thought themselves, that could get the smallest peece or shred of any thing that came neere to his body: and thus they continued all the day, the body lying still open, to be visited in this manner.

When night was come, they buried him in a goodly Marble tombe, erected in a faire Chappell purposely; and for many dayes after following, it was most strange to see, how the people of the Country came thither on heapes, with holy Candles and other offerings, with Images of waxe fastened to the Tombe, in signe of Sacred and solemne Vowes, to this new created Saint. And so farre was spread the fame and renowne of his sanctity, devotion, and integrity of life, maintained constantly by the Fathers of the Convent; that if any one fell sicke in neede, distresse, or adversity, they would make their Vowes to no other Saint but him: naming him (as yet to this day they do) Saint Chappelet, affirming upon their Oathes, that infinite miracles were there daily performed by him, and especially on such, as came in devotion to visit his shrine.

In this manner lived and died Master Chappelet du Prat, who before he became a Saint, was as you have heard: and I will not deny it to be impossible, but that he may bee at rest among other blessed bodies. For although he lived lewdly and wickedly, yet such might be his contrition in the latest extreamity, that (questionlesse) he might finde mercie. But, because such things remaine unknowne to us, and speaking by outward appearance, vulgar judgement will censure otherwise of him, and thinke him to be rather in perdition, then in so blessed a place as Paradice. But referring that to the Omnipotents appointment, whose clemencie hath alwayes beene so great to us, that he regards not our errors, but the integrity of our Faith, making (by meanes of our continuall Mediator) of an open enemy, a converted sonne and servant. And as I began in his name, so will I conclude, desiring that it may evermore be had in due reverence, and referre we our selves thereto in all our necessities, with this setled assurance, that he is alwayes ready to heare us. And so he ceased.

THE SECOND NOVELL



WHEREIN IS CONTAINED AND EXPRESSED, THE LIBERALITY AND GOODNESSE OF GOD, EXTENDED TO THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

ABRAHAM *a Jew, being admonished or advised by a friend of his, named Jehannot de Chevigny, travailed from Paris unto Rome: And beholding there the wicked behaviour of men in the Church, returned backe to Paris againe, where yet (neverthelesse) he became a Christian.*

The Novell recited by Pamphilus, was highly pleasing to the company, and much commended by the Ladies: and after it had beene diligently observed among them, the Queene commanded Madam Neiphila (who was seated neerest to Pamphilus) that, in relating another of hers, she should follow on in the pastime thus begun. She being no lesse gracious in countenance, then merrily disposed; made answere, that shee would obey her charge, and began in this manner.

Pamphilus hath declared to us, by his Tale, how the goodnesse of God regardeth not our errors, when they proceede from things which wee cannot discerne. And I intend to approove by mine, what argument of infallible truth, the same benignity delivereth of it selfe, by enduring patiently the faults of them, that (both in word and worke) should declare unfaigned testimony of such gracious goodnesse, and not to live so dissolutely as they doe. To the end, that others illumined by their light of life, may beleeve with the stronger constancy of minde.

As I have heeretofore heard (Gracious Ladies) there lived a wealthy Marchant in Paris, being a Mercer, or seller of Silkes, named Jehannot de Chevigny, a man of faithfull, honest, and upright dealing; who held great affection and friendship with a very rich Jew, named Abraham, that was a Merchant also, and a man of very direct conversation. Jehannot well noting the honesty and loyall dealing of this Jew, began to have a Religious kinde of compassion in his soule, much pittying that a man so good in behaviour, so wise and discreete in all his actions, should be in danger of perdition thorow want of Faith. In which regard, lovingly he began to intreate him, that he would leave the errors of his Jewish beleefe, and follow the truth of Christianity, which he evidently saw (as being good and holy) daily to prosper and enlarge it selfe, whereas on the contrary, his profession decreased, and grew to nothing.

The Jew made answer, that he beleeved nothing to be so good and holy, as the Jewish Religion, and having beene borne therein, therein also he purposed to live and dye, no matter whatsoever being able to remove him from that resolution. For all this stiffe deniall, Jehannot would not so give him over; but pursued him still day by day, reitterating continually his former speeches to him: delivering infinite excellent and pregnant reasons, that Merchants themselves were not ignorant, how farre the Christian faith excelled the Jewish falshoods. And albeit the Jew was a very learned man in his owne Law, yet notwithstanding the intire amity he bare to Jehannot, or (perhaps) his words fortified by the blessed Spirit, were so prevailant with him, that the Jew felt a pleasing apprehension in them, though as yet his obstinacie stoode farre off from Conversion. But as he thus continued strong in opinion, so Jehannot lefte not hourely to labour him: insomuch, that the Jew being conquered by such earnest and continuall importunity, one day spake to Jehannot, saying.

My worthy friend Jehannot, thou art extremely desirous, that I should convert to Christianitie, and I am well contented to doe it; onely upon this condition: That first I wil journey to Rome, to see him whom thou sayest, is Gods general Vicar here on earth, and to consider on the course of his life and manners, and likewise of his Colledge of Cardinals. If he and they doe appeare such men to mee, as thy speeches affirme them to be, and thereby I may comprehend that thy Faith and Religion is better then mine, as with no meane paines thou endevourest to perswade mee, I will become a Christian as thou art: but if I finde it otherwise, I will continue as I am, a Jew.

Jehannot hearing these words, became exceeding sorrowfull, and sayd within himselfe; I have lost all the paines which I did thinke to be well employed, as hoping to have this man converted heere. For, if he go to the Court of Rome, and behold there the wickednes of the Priests lives, farewell all hope in me, of ever seeing him to become a Christian. But rather, were he already a Christian, without all question he would turne a Jew. And so going neerer to Abraham, he said. Alas my loving friend, why shouldst thou undertake such a tedious travel, and so great a charge, as thy journey from hence to Rome will cost thee? Consider, that to a rich man (as thou art) travaile by land or Sea is full of infinite dangers. Doest thou not thinke, that here are Religious men enow, who wil gladly bestow Baptisme upon thee? To mee therefore it plainely appeareth, that such a voyage is to no purpose. If thou standest upon any doubt or scruple, concerning the faith whereto I wish thee; where canst thou desire conference with greater Doctours, or men more learned in all respects, then this famous Cittie doth affoord thee, to resolve thee in any questionable case? Thou must thinke, that the Prelates are such there, as heere thou seest them to be, and yet they must needes be in much better condition at Rome, because they are neere to the principall Pastor. And therefore, if thou wilt credit my counsell, reserve this journey to some time more convenient, when the Jubilee of generall Pardon happeneth, and then (perchance) I will beare thee company, and go along with thee as in vowed Pilgrimage.

Whereto the Jew replyed: I beleeve Jehannot that all which thou hast said, may be so. But, to make short with thee, I am fully determined (if thou wouldst have me a Christian, as thou instantly urgest me to bee) to goe thither, for otherwise, I will continue as I am. Jehannot perceyving his setled purpose, said: Goe then in Gods name. But perswaded himselfe, that hee would never become a Christian, after he had once seene the Court of Rome: neverthelesse, he counted his labour not altogither lost, in regard he bestowed it to a good end, and honest intentions are to be commended.

The Jew mounted on horse-backe, and made no lingering in his journey to Rome; where being arrived, he was very honourably entertained by other Jewes dwelling in Rome. And during the time of his abiding there (without revealing to any one the reason of his comming thither) very heedfully he observed the maner of the Popes life, of the Cardinals, Prelates, and all the Courtiers. And being a man very discreet and judicious, hee apparantly perceived, both by his owne eye, and further information of friends; that from the highest to the lowest (without any restraint, remorse of conscience, shame, or feare of punishment) all sinned in abhominable luxurie, and not naturally onely, but in foule Sodomie, so that the credite of Strumpets and Boyes was not small, and yet might be too easily obtayned. Moreover, drunkards, belly-Gods, and servants of the paunch, more then of any thing else (even like brutish beasts after their luxury) were every where to be met withall. And upon further observation, hee saw all men so covetous and greedie of Coyne, that every thing was bought and solde for ready money, not onely the blood of men, but (in plaine termes) the faith of Christians, yea, and matters of divinest qualities, how, or to whomsoever appertaining, were it for Sacrifices or Benefices, whereof was made no mean merchandize, and more Brokers were there to be found (then in Paris attending upon all Trades) of manifest Symonie, under the nice name of Negotiation, and for gluttony, not sustentation: even as if God had not knowne the signification of vocables, nor the intentions of wicked hearts, but would suffer himselfe to bee deceived by the outward names of things, as wretched men commonly use to doe.

These things, and many more (fitter for silence, then for publication) were so deepely displeasing to the Jew, being a most sober and modest man; that he had soone seene enough, resolving on his returne to Paris, which very speedily he performed. And when Jehannot heard of his arrivall, crediting much rather other newes from him, then ever to see him a converted Christian; he went to welcome him, and kindly they feasted one another. After some few dayes of resting, Jehannot demanded of him; what he thought of our holy Father the Pope and his Cardinals, and generally of all the other Courtiers? Whereto the Jew readily answered; It is strange Jehannot, that God should give them so much as he doth. For I will truely tell thee, that if I had beene able to consider all those things, which there I have both heard and seene: I could then have resolved my selfe, never to have found in any Priest, either sanctity, devotion, good worke, example of honest life, or any good thing else beside. But if a man desire to see luxury, avarice, gluttony, and such wicked things, yea, worse, if worse may be, and held in generall estimation of all men; let him but goe to Rome, which I thinke rather to be the forge of damnable actions, then any way leaning to grace or goodnesse. And, for ought I could perceive, me thinkes your chiefe Pastour, and (consequently) all the rest of his dependants, doe strive so much as they may (with all their engine arte and endevour) to bring to nothing, or else to banish quite out of the world, Christian Religion, whereof they should be the support and foundation.

But because I perceive, that their wicked intent will never come to passe, but contrariwise, that your faith enlargeth it selfe, shining every day much more cleare and splendant: I gather thereby evidently, that the blessed Spirit is the true ground and defence thereof, as being more true and holy then any other. In which respect, whereas I stood stiffe and obstinate against the good admonitions, and never minded to become a Christian: now I freely open my heart unto thee, that nothing in the world can or shall hinder me, but I will be a Christian, as thou art. Let us therefore presently goe to the Church, and there (according to the true custome of your holy faiths) helpe me to be baptized.

Jehannot, who expected a farre contrary conclusion then this, hearing him speake it with such constancy; was the very gladdest man in the world, and went with him to the Church of Nostre Dame in Paris, where he requested the Priests there abiding, to bestow baptisme on Abraham, which they joyfully did, hearing him so earnestly to desire it. Jehannot was his Godfather, and named him John, and afterward, by learned Divines he was more fully instructed in the grounds of our faith; wherein he grew of great understanding, and led a very vertuous life.

THE THIRD NOVELL

WHEREBY THE AUTHOR, APPROVING THE CHRISTIAN FAITH, SHEWETH, HOW BENEFICIALL A SODAINE AND INGENIOUS ANSWERE MAY FALL OUT TO BEE, ESPECIALLY WHEN A MAN FINDS HIMSELFE IN SOME EVIDENT DANGER.

Melchisedech *a Jew, by recounting a Tale of three Rings, to the great Soldan, named Saladine, prevented a great danger which was prepared for him.*

Madame Neiphila having ended her Discourse, which was well allowed of by all the company; it pleased the Queene, that Madame Philomena should next succeede in order, who thus began.

The Tale delivered by Neiphila, maketh mee remember a doubtfull case, which sometime hapned to another Jew. And because that God, and the truth of his holy Faith, hath bene already very well discoursed on: it shall not seeme unfitting (in my poore opinion) to descend now into the accidents of men. Wherefore, I will relate a matter unto you, which being attentively heard and considered; may make you much more circumspect, in answering to divers questions and demands, then (perhaps) otherwise you would be. Consider then (most woorthy assembly) that like as folly or dulnesse, many times hath overthrowne some men from place of eminencie, into most great and greevous miseries: even so, discreet sense and good understanding, hath delivered many out of irksome perils, and seated them in safest security. And to prove it true, that folly hath made many fall from high authority, into poore and despised calamity; may be avouched by infinite examples, which now were needelesse to remember: But, that good sense and able understanding, may proove to be the occasion of great desolation, without happy prevention, I will declare unto you in very few words, and make it good according to my promise.

Saladine, was a man so powerfull and valiant, as not onely his very valour made him Soldan of Babylon, and also gave him many signall victories, over Kings of the Sarrazens, and of Christians likewise. Having in divers Warres, and other magnificent employments, of his owne, wasted all his treasure, and (by reason of some sodaine accident happening to him) standing in neede to use some great summe of money, yet not readily knowing where, or how to procure it; he remembred a rich Jew named Melchisedech, that lent out money to use or interest in the City of Alexandria. This man he imagined best able to furnish him, if he could be won to do it willingly: but he was knowne to be so gripple and miserable, that hardly any meanes would drawe him to it. In the end, constrained by necessity, and labouring his wits for some apt device whereby he might have it: he concluded, though hee might not compell him to do it, yet by a practise shadowed with good reason to ensnare him. And having sent for him, entertained him very familiarly in his Court, and sitting downe by him, thus began.

Honest man, I have often heard it reported by many, that thou art very skilfull, and in cases concerning God, thou goest beyond all other of these times: wherefore, I would gladly bee informed by thee, which of those three Lawes or Religions, thou takest to be truest; that of the Jew, the other of the Sarazen, or that of the Christian? The Jew, being a very wise man, plainely perceived, that Saladine sought to entrap him in his answere, and so to raise some quarrell against him. For, if he commended any one of those Lawes above the other, he knew that Saladine had what he aymed at. Wherefore, bethinking himselfe to shape such an answere, as might no way trouble or entangle him: summoning all his sences together, and considering, that dallying with the Soldane might redound to his no meane danger, thus he replied.

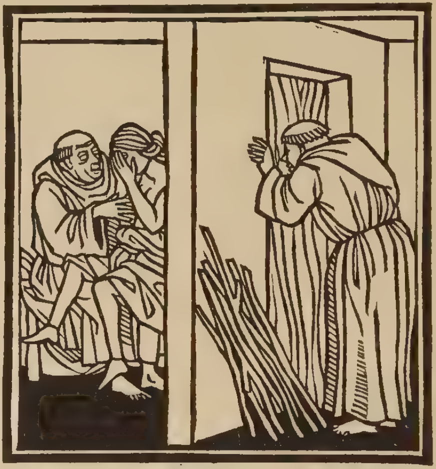
My Lord, the question propounded by you, is faire and worthy, and to answere my opinion truely thereof, doth necessarily require some time of consideration, if it might stand with your liking to allow it: but if not, let me first make entrance to my reply, with a pretty tale, and well worth the hearing. I have oftentimes heard it reported, that (long since) there was a very wealthy man, who (among other precious Jewels of his owne) had a goodly Ring of great valew; the beauty and estimation whereof, made him earnestly desirous to leave it as a perpetuall memory and honour to his successors. Whereupon, he willed and ordained, that he among his male children, with whom this Ring (being left by the Father) should be found in custody after his death; hee and none other, was to bee reputed his heire, and to be honoured and reverenced by all the rest, as being the prime and worthiest person. That Sonne, to whom this Ring was left by him, kept the same course to his posterity, dealing (in all respects) as his predecessor had done; so that (in short time) the Ring (from hand to hand) had many owners by Legacie.

At length, came to the hand of one, who had three sonnes, all of them goodly and vertuous persons, and verie obedient to their Father: in which regard, he affected them all equally, without any difference or partiall respect. The custome of this Ring being knowne to them, each one of them (coveting to beare esteeme above the other) desired (as hee could best make his meanes) his Father, that in regard he was now growne very old, he would leave that Ring to him, whereby he should bee acknowledged for his heire. The good man, who loved no one of them more then the other, knew not how to make his choise, nor to which of them he should leave the Ring: yet having past his promise to them severally, he studied by what meanes to satisfie them all three. Wherefore, secretly having conferred with a curious and excellent Goldsmith, hee caused two other Rings to bee made, so really resembling the first made Ring, that himselfe (when he had them in his hand) could not distinguish which was the right one.

Lying upon his death-bed, and his Sonnes then plying him by their best opportunities, he gave to each of them a Ring. And they (after his death) presuming severally upon their right to the inheritance and honor, grew to great contradiction and square: each man producing then his Ring, which were so truely all alike in resemblance, as no one could know the right Ring from the other. And therefore, suite in Law, to distinguish the true heire to his Father, continued long time, and so it dooth yet to this very day. In like manner my good Lord, concerning those three Lawes given by God the Father, to three such people as you have propounded: each of them do imagine that they have the heritage of God, and his true Law, and also duely to performe his Commandements; but which of them do so indeede, the question (as of the three Rings) is yet remaining.

Saladine well perceyving, that the Jew was too cunning to bee caught in his snare, and had answered so well, that to doe him further violence, would redound unto his perpetuall dishonour; resolved to reveale his neede and extremity, and try if hee would therein friendly sted him. Having disclosed the matter, and how he purposed to have dealt with him, if he had not returned so wise an answere; the Jew lent him so great a sum of money as hee demanded, and Saladine repayed it againe to him justly, giving him other great gifts beside: respecting him as his especiall friend, and maintaining him in very honourable condition, neere unto his owne person.

THE FOURTH NOVELL



WHEREIN MAY BEE NOTED, THAT SUCH MEN AS WILL REPROVE THOSE ERROURS IN OTHERS, WHICH REMAINE IN THEMSELVES, COMMONLY ARE THE AUTHORS OF THEIR OWNE REPREHENSION.

A MONKE *having committed an offence, deserving to be very greevously punished, freed himselfe from the paine to be inflicted on him, by wittily reprehending his Abbot, with the very same fault.*

So ceased Madame Philomena, after the conclusion of her Tale: when Dioneus sitting next unto her, (without tarrying for any other command from the Queene, knowing by the order formerly begun, that hee was to follow in the same course) spake in this manner.

Gracious Ladies, if I faile not in understanding your generall intention, we are purposely assembled heere to tell Tales; and especially such as may please our selves. In which respect, because nothing shold be done disorderly, I hold it lawfull for every one (as our Queene decreed before her Dignity) to relate such a Noveltie, as in their owne judgement may cause most contentment. Wherefore having heard that by the good admonitions of Jehannot de Chevigny, Abraham the Jew was advised to the salvation of his soule, and Melchisedech (by his witty understanding) defended his riches from the traines of Saladine: I now purpose to tell you in a few plaine words, without feare of receiving any reprehension, how cunningly a Monke compassed his deliverance, from a punishment intended towards him.

There was in the Country of Lunigiana (which is not far distant from our owne) a Monastery, which sometime was better furnished with holinesse and Religion, then now adayes they are: wherein lived (among divers other) a yong Novice Monke, whose hot and lusty disposition (being in the vigour of his yeeres) was such, as neither Fasts nor prayers had any great power over him. It chanced on a fasting day about high noon, when all the other Monkes were asleep in their Dormitaries or Dorters, this frolicke Friar was walking alone in their Church, which stoode in a very solitarie place, where ruminating on many matters by himselfe, hee espyed a prettie handsome Wench (some Husbandmans daughter in the Countrey, that had beene gathering rootes and hearbes in the field) upon her knees before an Altar; whom he had no sooner seene, but immediately hee felt effeminate temptations, and such as ill fitted with his profession.

Lascivious desire, and no religious devotion, made him draw neere her, and whether under shrift (the onely cloake to compasse carnal affections) or some other as close conference to as pernitious and vile a purpose, I know not: but so farre he prevailed upon her frailety, and such a bargaine passed betweene them, that from the Church, he wonne her to his Chamber, before any person could perceive it. Now, while this yong lusty Monke (transported with overfond affection) was more carelesse of his dalliance, then he should have bene: the Lord Abbot being newly arisen from sleepe, and walking softly about the Cloyster, came to the Monkes Dorter doore, where hearing what noyse was made betweene them, and a feminine voyce more strange then hee was wont to heare; he layed his eare close to the Chamber doore, and plainly perceived, that a woman was within. Wherewith being much moved, he intended sodainly to make him open the doore; but (upon better consideration) hee conceyved it farre more fitting for him, to returne backe to his owne Chamber, and tarry till the Monke should come forth.

The Monke, though his delight with the Damosell was extraordinary, yet feare and suspition followed upon it; for, in the very height of all his wantonnesse, he heard a soft treading about the doore. And prying thorow a small crevice in the same dore, perceived apparantly, that the Abbot himselfe stood listening there, and could not be ignorant but that the Maide was with him in the Chamber. As after pleasure ensueth paine, for the veniall Monke knew well enough (though wanton heate would not let him heede it before) that most greevous punishment must bee inflicted on him, which made him sad beyond all measure: Neverthelesse, without disclosing his dismay to the yong Maiden, he began to consider with himselfe on many meanes, whereby to find out one that might best fit his turne. And suddenly conceited an apt stratagem, which sorted to such effect as he would have it: whereupon, seeming satisfied for that season, he tolde the Damosell, that (being carefull of her credit) as hee had brought her in unseene of any, so he would free her from thence againe, desiring her to tarrie there (without making any noyse at all) untill such time as he returned to her.

Going forth of the chamber, and locking it fast with the key, he went directly to the Lord Abbots lodging, and delivering him the saide key (as every Monke used to doe the like, when he went abroade out of the Convent) setting a good countenance on the matter, boldly saide; My Lord, I have not yet brought in all my part of the wood, which lieth ready cut downe in the Forrest; and having now convenient time to doe it, if you please to give me leave, I will goe and fetch it. The Abbot perswading himselfe, that he had not beene discovered by the Monke, and to be resolved more assuredly in the offence committed; being not a little jocund of so happy an accident, gladly tooke the key, and gave him leave to fetch the wood.

No sooner was he gone, but the Abbot beganne to consider with himselfe, what he were best to doe in this case, either (in the presence of all the other Monkes) to open the Chamber doore, that so the offence being knowne to them all, they might have no occasion of murmuring against him, when he proceeded in the Monkes punishment; or rather should first understand of the Damosell her selfe, how, and in what manner shee was brought thither. Furthermore, he considered, that shee might be a woman of respect, or some such mans daughter, as would not take it well, to have her disgraced before all the Monkes. Wherefore hee concluded, first to see (himselfe) what shee was, and then (afterward) to resolve upon the rest. So going very softly to the Chamber, and entring in, locked the doore fast with the key, when the poore Damosell thinking it had beene the gallant young Monke; but finding it to be the Lord Abbot, shee fell on her knees weeping, as fearing now to receive publike shame, by being betrayed in this unkinde manner.

My Lord Abbot looking demurely on the Maide, and perceiving her to be faire, feate, and lovely; felt immediately (although he was olde) no lesse spurring on to fleshly desires, then the young Monke before had done; whereupon he beganne to conferre thus privately with himselfe. Why should I not take pleasure, when I may freely have it? Cares and molestations I endure every day, but sildome find such delights prepared for me. This is a delicate sweete young Damosell, and here is no eye that can discover me. If I can enduce her to doe as I would have her, I know no reason why I should gaine-say it. No man can know it, or any tongue blaze it abroade; and sinne so concealed, is halfe pardoned. Such a faire fortune as this is, perhaps hereafter will never befall me; and therefore I hold it wisedome, to take such a benefit when a man may enjoy it.

Upon this immodest meditation, and his purpose quite altered which he came for; he went neerer to her, and very kindly began to comfort her, desiring her to forbeare weeping: and (by further insinuating speeches) acquainted her with his amorous intention. The Maide, who was made neither of yron nor diamond, and seeking to prevent one shame by another, was easily wonne to the Abbots will, which caused him to embrace and kisse her often.

Our lusty young novice Monke, whom the Abbot imagined to bee gone for wood, had hid himselfe aloft upon the roofe of the Dorter, where, when he saw the Abbot enter alone into the Chamber, he lost a great part of his former feare, promising to himselfe a kinde of perswasion, that somewhat would ensue to his better comfort; but when he beheld him lockt into the Chamber, then his hope grew to undoubted certainty. A little chincke or crevice favoured him, whereat he could both heare and see, whatsoever was done or spoken by them: so, when the Abbot thought hee had staide long enough with the Damosell, leaving her still there, and locking the doore fast againe, hee returned thence to his owne Chamber.

Within some short while after, the Abbot knowing the Monke to be in the Convent, and supposing him to be lately returned with the wood, determined to reprove him sharpely, and to have him closely imprisoned, that the Damosell might remaine solie to himselfe. And causing him to be called presently before him, with a very stearne and angry countenance, giving him many harsh and bitter speeches, commanded, that he should be clapt in prison.

The Monke very readily answered, saying. My good Lord, I have not yet beene so long in the Order of Saint Benedict, as to learne all the particularities thereto belonging. And beside Sir, you never shewed mee or any of my Brethren, in what manner we young Monkes ought to use women, as you have otherwise done for our custome of prayer and fasting. But seeing you have so lately therein instructed mee, and by your owne example how to doe it: I heere solemnely promise you, if you please to pardon me but this one error, I will never faile therein againe, but dayly follow what I have seene you doe.

The Abbot, being a man of quicke apprehension, perceived instantly by this answere; that the Monke not onely knew as much as he did, but also had seene (what was intended) that hee should not. Wherefore, finding himselfe to be as faulty as the Monke, and that hee could not shame him, but worthily had deserved as much himselfe; pardoning him, and imposing silence on eithers offence: they convayed the poore abused Damosell forth of their doores, she purposing (never after) to transgresse in the like manner.

THE FIFT NOVELL

DECLARING, THAT WISE AND VERTUOUS LADIES, OUGHT TO HOLD THEIR CHASTITIE IN MORE ESTEEME, THEN THE GREATNESSE AND TREASURES OF PRINCES: AND THAT A DISCREETE LORD SHOULD NOT OFFER MODESTIE VIOLENCE.

THE *Lady Marquesse of Montferrat, with a Banquet of Hennes, and divers other gracious speeches beside, repressed the fond love of the King of France.*

THE Tale reported by Dioneus, at the first hearing of the Ladies, began to rellish of some immodestie, as the bashfull blood mounting up into their faces, delivered by apparant testimonie. And beholding one another with scarse-pleasing lookes, during all the time it was in discoursing, no sooner had he concluded: but with a few milde and gentle speeches, they gave him a modest reprehension, and meaning to let him know that such tales ought not to be tolde among women. Afterward, the Queene commaunded Madam Fiammetta, (sitting on a banke of flowers before her) to take her turne as next in order; and she, smiling with such a virgin blush, as very beautifully became her, began in this manner.

It is no little joy to mee, that we understand so well (by the discourses already past) what power consisteth in the delivery of wise and readie answeres; And because it is a great part of sence and judgement in men, to affect women of greater birth and quality then themselves, as also an admirable fore-sight in women, to keepe off from being surprized in love, by Lords going beyond them in degree: a matter offereth it selfe to my memory, well deserving my speech and your attention, how a Gentlewoman (both in word and deede) should defend her honor in that kind, when importunity laboureth to betray it.

The Marquesse of Montferrat was a worthy and valiant Knight, who being Captaine Generall for the Church, the necessary service required his company on the Seas, in a goodly Army of the Christians against the Turkes. Upon a day, in the Court of King Philip, sirnamed the one-eyed King (who likewise made preparation in France, for a royall assistance to that expedition) as many speeches were delivered, concerning the valour and manhoode of this Marquesse: it fortuned, that a Knight was then present, who knew him very familiarly, and he gave an addition to the former commendation, that the whole world contained not a more equall couple in marriage, then the Marquesse and his Lady. For, as among all knights, the Marquesse could hardly be paraleld for Armes and Honour; even so his wife, in comparison of all other Ladies, was scarcely matchable for beauty and vertue. Which words were so weighty in the apprehension of King Philip, that sodainly (having as yet never seen her) he began to affect her very earnestly, concluding to embarke himselfe at Gennes or Genoua, there to set forward on the intended voyage, and journying thither by land, hee would shape some honest excuse to see the Lady Marquesse, whose Lord being then from home, opinion perswaded him over fondly, that he should easily obtaine the issue of his amorous desire.

When hee was come within a dayes journey, where the Ladie Marquesse then lay; he sent her word that she should expect his company on the morrow at dinner. The Lady, being singularly wise and judicious, answered the Messenger, that she reputed the Kings comming to her, as an extraordinary grace and favour, and that he should bee most heartily welcome. Afterward, entring into further consideration with her selfe, what the King might meane by his private visitation, knowing her Husband to be from home, and it to bee no meane barre to his apter entertainement: at last she discreetly conceited (and therin was not deceived) that babling report of her beauty and perfections, might thus occasion the Kings comming thither, his journey lying else a quite contrary way. Notwithstanding, being a Princely Lady, and so loyal a wife as ever lived shee intended to give him her best entertainement: summoning the chiefest Gentlemen in the Country together, to take due order (by their advice) for giving the King a gracious Welcome. But concerning the dinner, and diet for service to his Table, that remained onely at her own disposing.

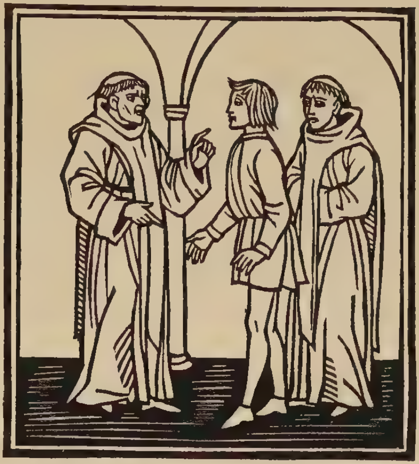
Sending presently abroad, and buying all the Hennes that the Country affoorded, shee commaunded her Cookes, that onely of them (without any other provision beside) they should prepare all the services that they could devise. On the morrow, the King came according to his promise, and was most honourably welcomed by the Lady, who seemed in his eye (far beyond the Knights speeches of her) the fairest creature that ever he had seene before; whereat he mervailed not a little, extolling her perfections to be peerelesse, which much the more enflamed his affections, and (almost) made his desires impatient. The King beeing withdrawne into such Chambers, as orderly were prepared for him, and as beseemed so great a Prince: the houre of dinner drawing on, the King and the Lady Marquesse were seated at one Table, and his attendants placed at other tables, answerable to their degrees of honour.

Plenty of dishes being served in, and the rarest Wines that the Countrey yeelded, the King had more minde to the faire Lady Marques, then any meate that stood on the Table. Neverthelesse, observing each service after other, and that all the Viands (though variously cooked, and in divers kindes) were nothing else but Hennes onely, he began to wonder; and so much the rather, because he knew the Country to be of such quality, that it afforded all plenty both of Fowles and Venison: beside, after the time of his comming was heard, they had respite enough, both for hawking and hunting; and therefore it encreased his marvell the more, that nothing was provided for him, but Hennes onely: wherein to be the better resolved, turning a merry countenance to the Lady, thus he spake. Madam, are Hennes onely bred in this Country, and no Cockes? The Lady Marquesse, very well understanding his demand, which fitted her with an apt opportunity, to thwart his idle hope, and defend her owne honour; boldly returned the King this answere. Not so my Lord, but women and wives, howsoever they differ in garments and graces one from another; yet notwithstanding, they are all heere as they bee in other places.

When the King heard this reply, he knew well enough the occasion of his Henne dinner, as also, what vertue lay couched under her answere; perceiving apparantly, that wanton words would prove but in vaine, and such a woman was not easily to be seduced; wherefore, as hee grew enamored on her inconsiderately, so he found it best fitting for his honour, to quench this heate with wisedome discreetly. And so, without any more words, or further hope of speeding in so unkingly a purpose, dinner being ended, by a sudden departing, he smoothly shadowed the cause of his comming, and thanking her for the honour shee had done him, commended her to her chaste disposition, and posted away with speede to Gennes.

⁂

THE SIXT NOVELL



DECLARING, THAT IN FEW, DISCREETE, AND WELL PLACED WORDS, THE COVERED CRAFT OF CHURCH-MEN MAY BEE JUSTLY REPROVED, AND THEIR HYPOCRISIE HONESTLY DISCOVERED.

An *honest plaine meaning man, (simply and conscionably) reprehended the malignity, hypocrisie, and misdemeanour of many Religious persons.*

Madam Æmilia sitting next to the gentle Lady Fiammetta, perceiving the modest chastisement, which the vertuous Lady Marquesse had given to the King of France, was generally graced by the whole Assembly; began (after the Queene had thereto appointed her) in these words. Nor will I conceale the deserved reprehension, which an honest simple lay-man, gave to a covetous holy Father, in very few words; yet more to be commended, then derided.

Not long since (worthy Ladies) there dwelt in our owne native City, a Friar Minor, an Inquisitor after matters of Faith; who, although he laboured greatly to seeme a sanctified man, and an earnest affecter of Christian Religion, (as all of them appeare to be in outward shew;) yet he was a much better Inquisitor after them that had their purses plenteously stored with money, then of such as were slenderly grounded in Faith. By which diligent continued care in him, he found out a man, more rich in purse, then understanding; and yet not so defective in matters of faith, as misguided by his owne simple speaking, and (perhaps) when his braine was well warmed with wine, words fell more foolishly from him, then in better judgement they could have done.

Being on a day in company, (very little differing in quality from him selfe) he chanced to say; that he had beene at such good wine, as God himselfe did never drinke better. Which words (by some Sicophant then in presence) being carried to this curious Inquisitor, and he well knowing, that the mans faculties were great, and his bagges swolne up full with no meane abundance: *Cum gladijs et fustibus;* With Booke, Bell, and Candle, he raysed an hoast of execrations against him, and the Sumner cited him with a solemne Processe to appeare before him, understanding sufficiently, that this course would sooner fetch money from him, then amend any misbeliefe in the man; for no further reformation did he seeke after.

The man comming before him, hee demanded, if the accusation intimated against him, was true or no? Whereto the honest man answered, that he could not denie the speaking of such words, and declared in what manner they were uttered. Presently the Inquisitor, most devoutly addicted to Saint John with the golden beard, saide; What? Doest thou make our Lord a drinker, and a curious quaffer of wines, as if he were a glutton, a belly-god, or a Taverne haunter, as thou, and other drunkards are. Being an hypocrite, as thou art, thou thinkest this to be but a light matter, because it may seeme so in thine owne opinion: but I tell thee plainely, that it deserveth fire and faggot, if I should proceede in Justice to inflict it on thee: with these, and other such like threatning words, as also a very stearne and angry countenance, he made the man beleeve himselfe to be an Epicure, and that hee denied the eternity of the soule; whereby he fell into such a trembling feare, as doubting indeede, least he should be burned; that, to be more mercifully dealt withal, he rounded him in the eare, and by secret meanes, so annointed his hands with Saint Johns golden grease (a verie singular remedie against the Disease Pestilentiall in covetous Priests, especially Friars Minors, that dare touch no money) as the case became very quickly altered.

This soveraigne Unction was of such vertue (though Galen speakes not a word thereof among all his cheefest Medicines) and so farre prevailed, that the terrible threatning words of fire and faggot, became meerly frozen up, and gracious language blew a more gentle and calmer ayre; the Inquisitor delivering him an hallowed Crucifixe, creating him a Soldier of the Crosse (because he had payed Crosses good store for it,) and even as if he were to travell under that Standard to the holy Land; so did hee appoint him a home-paying pennance, namely, to visit him thrice every weeke in his Chamber, and to annoint his hands with the selfe-same yellow unguent, and afterward, to heare Masse of the holy Crosse, visiting him also at dinner time, which being ended, to do nothing all the rest of the day, but according as he directed him.

The simple man, yet not so simple, but seeing that this weekely greazing the Inquisitors hands, would in time graspe away all his gold, grew weary of this annointing, and began to consider with himselfe, how to stay the course of this chargeable penance. And comming one morning (according to his injunction) to heare Masse, in the Gospell he observed these words; *You* *shall receive an hundred for one, and so possesse eternall life;* which saying, he kept perfectly in his memory: and as he was commanded, at dinner time, he came to the Inquisitor, finding him (among his fellowes) seated at the Table. The Inquisitor presently demaunded of him, whether he had heard Masse that morning, or no? Yes Sir, replyed the man very readily. Hast thou heard any thing therein (quoth the Inquisitor) whereof thou art doubtfull, or desirst to be further informed? Surely Sir, answered the plaine-meaning man, I make no doubt of any thing I have heard, but do beleeve all constantly: onely one thing troubleth me much, and maketh me very compassionate of you, and of all these holy Fathers your brethren, perceiving in what wofull and wretched estate you will be, when you shall come into another world. What words are these, quoth the Inquisitor? And why art thou moved to such compassion of us? O good Sir, saide the man, do you remember the wordes in the Gospell this morning, You shall receive an hundred for one? That is verie true replyed the Inquisitor, but what mooveth thee to urge those words?

I will tell you Sir, answered the plain fellow, so it might please you not to be offended. Since the time of my resorting hither, I have daily seene many poore people at your doore, and (out of your abundance) when you and your Brethren have fed sufficiently, every one hath had a good messe of Pottage: now Sir, if for every dishfull given, you are sure to receive an hundred againe, you will all be meerely drowned in pottage. Although the rest (sitting at the Table with the Inquisitor) laughed heartily at this jest; yet he found himselfe toucht in another nature, having hypocritically received for one poore offence, above three hundred peeces of Gold, and not a mite to be restored againe. But fearing to be further disclosed, yet threatning him with another Processe in law, for abusing the words of the Gospel, he was content to dismisse him for altogither, without any more golden greasing in the hand.

THE SEVENTH NOVELL

APPROVING, THAT IT IS MUCH UNFITTING FOR A PRINCE, OR GREAT PERSON, TO BEE COVETOUS; BUT RATHER TO BE LIBERALL TO ALL MEN.

Bergamino, *by telling a tale of a skilfull man, named Primasso, and of an Abbot of Clugni; honestly checked a new kinde of Covetousnesse, in Mayster Can de la Scala.*

The courteous demeanor of Madam Æmilia, and the quaintnesse of her discourse, caused both the Queene, and the rest of the company, to commend the invention of carrying the Crosse, and the golden oyntment appointed for pennance. Afterward, Philostratus, who was in order to speake next, began in this manner.

It is a commendable thing (faire Ladies) to hit a But that never stirreth out of his place: but it is a matter much more admirable, to see a thing suddainely appearing, and sildome or never frequented before, to bee as suddenly hit by an ordinary Archer. The vicious and polluted lives of Priests, yeeldeth matter of it selfe in many things, deserving speech and reprehension, as a true But of wickednes, and well worthy to be sharply shot at. And therefore, though that honest meaning man did wisely, in touching Master Inquisitor to the quicke, with the hypocriticall charity of Monkes and Friars, in giving such things to the poore, as were more meete for Swine, or to be worse throwne away, yet I hold him more to be commended, who (by occasion of a former tale, and which I purpose to relate) pleasantly reprooved Master Can de la Scala, a Magnifico and mighty Lord, for a sudden and unaccustomed covetousnesse appearing in him, figuring by other men, that which hee intended to say of him, in manner following.

Master Can de la Scala, as fame ranne abroad of him in all places, was (beyond the infinite favours of Fortune towards him) one of the most notable and magnificent Lords that ever lived in Italy, since the daies of Fredericke the second, Emperor. He determining to procure a very solemne assembly at Verona, and many people being met there from divers places, especially Gentlemen of all degrees; suddenly (upon what occasion I know not) his minde altred, and hee would not goe forward with his intention. Most of them he partly recompenced which were come thither, and they dismissed to depart at their pleasure, one onely man remained unrespected, or in any kinde sort sent away, whose name was Bergamino, a man very pleasantly disposed, and so wittily readie in speaking and answering, as none could easily credit it, but such as heard him; and although his recompence seemed over-long delayed, yet hee made no doubt of a beneficiall ending.

By some enemies of his, Master Can de la Scala was incensed, that whatsoever he gave or bestowed on him, was as ill imployed and utterly lost, as if it were throwne into the fire, and therefore he neither did or spake any thing to him. Some few dayes being passed over, and Bergamino perceiving, that hee was neither called, nor any account made of, notwithstanding many manly good parts in him; observing beside, that hee found a shrewd consumption in his purse, his Inne, horses, and servants, being chargeable to him, he began to grow extremely melancholly, and yet hee attended in expectation day by day, as thinking it farre unfitting for him, to depart before he was bidden farewell.

Having brought with him thither three goodly rich garments, which had beene given him by sundrie Lords, for his more sightly appearance at this great meeting; the importunate Host being greedie of payment, first he delivered him one of them, and yet not halfe the score being wiped off, the second must needes follow; and beside, except he meant to leave his lodging, hee must live upon the third so long as it would last, till hee saw what end his hopes would sort too. It fortuned, during the time of living thus upon his last refuge, that hee met with Maister Can one day at dinner, where he presented himselfe before him, with a discontented countenance: which Maister Can well observing, more to distaste him, then take delight in any thing that could come from him, he sayd. Bergamino, how cheerest thou? Thou art very melancholly, I prythee tell us why? Bergamino suddenly, without any premeditation, yet seeming as if he had long considered thereon, reported this Tale.

Sir, I have heard of a certaine man, named Primasso, one skilfully learned in the Grammar, and (beyond all other) a very witty and ready versifier: in regard whereof, he was so much admired, and farre renowned, that such as never saw him, but onely heard of him, could easily say, this is Primasso. It came to passe, that being once at Paris, in poore estate, as commonly he could light on no better fortune (because vertue is slenderly rewarded, by such as have the greatest possessions) he heard much fame of the Abbot of Clugni, a man reputed (next to the Pope) to be the richest Prelate of the Church. Of him he heard wonderfull and magnificent matters, that he alwayes kept an open and hospitable Court, and never made refusall of any (from whence soever hee came or went) but they did eate and drinke freely there; provided, that they came when the Abbot was set at the Table. Primasso hearing this, and being an earnest desirer to see magnificent and vertuous men, hee resolved to goe see this rare bounty of the Abbot, demanding how far he dwelt from Paris? Being answered, about some three Leagues thence. Primasso made account, that if he went on betimes in the morning, he should easily reach thither before the houre for dinner.

Being instructed in the way, and not finding any to walke along with him; fearing, if he went without some furnishment, and should stay long there for his dinner, he might (perhaps) complaine of hunger: he therefore carried three loaves of bread with him, knowing that he could meet with water every where, albeit he used to drinke but little. Having aptly conveyed his bread about him, he went on his journy, and arrived at the Lord Abbots Court, an indifferent while before dinner time: wherefore entering into the great Hall, and so from place to place, beholding the great multitude of Tables, bountifull preparation in the Kitchin, and what admirable provision there was for dinner, he said to himselfe; Truly this man is more magnificent then fame hath made him, because shee speakes too sparingly of him.

While thus he went about, considering on all these things very respectively, he saw the Maister of the Abbots Houshold (because then it was the houre of dinner) command water to be brought for washing hands, so everie one sitting down at the Table, it fell to the lot of Primasso, to sit directly against the doore, whereat the Abbot must enter into the Hall. The custome in this Court was such, that no manner of Foode should be served to any of the Table, untill such time as the Lord Abbot was himselfe set: whereupon, every thing being fit and ready, the Master of the Houshold went to tell his Lord, that nothing now wanted but his onely presence.

The Abbot comming from his Chamber to enter the Hall, looking about him, as hee was wont to doe; the first man hee saw was Primasso, who being but in homely habite, and he having not seene him before to his remembrance, a present bad conceite possessed his braine, that he never saw an unworthier person, saying within himselfe: See how I give my goods away to bee devoured. So returning backe to his Chamber againe; commaunded the doore to be made fast, demaunding of every man neere about him, if they knew the base Knave that sate before his entrance into the Hall, and all his servants answered no. Primasso being extreamely hungry, with travailing on foote so farre, and never used to fast so long; expecting still when meate would be served in, and that the Abbot came not at all: drew out one of his loaves which hee brought with him, and very heartily fell to feeding.

My Lord Abbot, after hee had stayed within an indifferent while, sent forth one of his men, to see if the poore fellow was gone, or no. The servant told him, that he stayed there, and fed upon dry bread, which it seemed he had brought thither with him. Let him feede on his owne (replyed the Abbot) for he shall taste of none of mine this day. Gladly wold the Abbot, that Primasso should have gone thence of himselfe, and yet held it scarsely honest in his Lordship, to dismisse him by his owne command. Primasso having eaten one of his Loaves, and yet the Abbot was not come; began to feede upon the second: the Abbot still sending to expect his absence, and answered as he was before. At length, the Abbot not comming, and Primasso having eaten up his second loafe, hunger compeld him to begin with the third.

When these newes were carried to the Abbot, sodainly he brake forth and saide. What new kinde of needy tricke hath my braine begotte this day? Why do I grow disdainfull against any man whatsoever? I have long time allowed my meate to be eaten by all commers that did please to visit me, without exception against any person, Gentleman, Yeoman, poore or rich, Marchant or Minstrill, honest man or knave, never refraining my presence in the Hall, by basely contemning one poore man. Beleeve me, covetousnesse of one mans meate, doth ill agree with mine estate and calling. What though he appeareth a wretched fellow to me? He may be of greater merit then I can imagine, and deserve more honor then I am able to give him.

Having thus discoursed with himselfe, he would needs understand of whence, and what he was, and finding him to be Primasso, come onely to see the magnificence which he had reported of him, knowing also (by the generall fame noysed every where of him) that he was reputed to be a learned, honest, and ingenious man: he grew greatly ashamed of his owne folly, and being desirous to make him an amends, strove many waies how to do him honor. When dinner was ended, the Abbot bestowed honorable garments on him, such as beseemed his degree and merit, and putting good store of money in his purse, as also giving him a good horse to ride on, left it at his owne free election, whether he would stay there still with him, or depart at his pleasure. Wherewith Primasso being highly contented, yeelding him the heartiest thankes he could devise to do, returned to Paris on horse-backe, albeit he came poorely thether on foot.

Master Can de la Scala, who was a man of good understanding, perceived immediately (without any further interpretation) what Bergamino meant by this morall, and smiling on him, saide: Bergamino, thou hast honestly expressed thy vertue and necessities, and justly reprooved mine avarice, niggardnesse, and base folly. And trust me Bergamino, I never felt such a fit of covetousnesse come upon me, as this which I have dishonestly declared to thee: and which I will now banish from me, with the same correction as thou hast taught mee. So, having payed the Host all his charges, redeeming also his robes or garments, mounting him on a good Gelding, and putting plenty of Crownes in his purse, he referd it to his owne choise to depart, or dwell there still with him.

THE EIGHT NOVELL

WHICH PLAINLY DECLARETH, THAT A COVETOUS GENTLEMAN, IS NOT WORTHY OF ANY HONOR OR RESPECT.

GUILLAUME *Boursier, with a few quaint and familiar words, checkt the miserable covetousnesse of Signior Herminio de Grimaldi.*

MADAM Lauretta, sitting next to Philostratus, when she had heard the witty conceite of Bergamino; knowing, that she was to say somewhat, without injunction or command, pleasantly thus began.

This last discourse (faire and vertuous company) induceth me to tell you, how an honest Courtier reprehended in like manner (and nothing unprofitably) base covetousnesse in a Merchant of extraordinary wealth. Which Tale, although (in effect) it may seeme to resemble the former; yet perhaps, it will prove no lesse pleasing to you, in regard it sorted to as good an end.

It is no long time since, that there lived in Genes or Geneway, a Gentleman named Signior Herminio de Grimaldo, who (as every one wel knew) was more rich in inheritances, and ready summes of currant money then any other knowne Citizen in Italy. And as hee surpassed other men in wealth, so did he likewise excell them in wretched Avarice, being so miserably greedy and covetous, as no man in the world could be more wicked that way; because, not onely he kept his purse lockt up from pleasuring any, but denied needfull things to himselfe, enduring many miseries onely to avoid expences, contrary to the Genewayes generall custom, who alwayes delighted to be decently cloathed, and to have their dyet of the best. By reason of which most miserable basenesse, they tooke away from him the Sirname of Grimaldi, whereof he was in right descended, and called him master Herminio the covetous Mizer, a nickname very notably agreeing with his gripple nature.

It came to passe, that in this time of his spending nothing, but multiplying daily by infinite meanes, that a civill honest Gentleman (a Courtier of ready wit, and discoursive in Languages) came to Geneway, being named Guillaume Boursier. A man very farre differing from divers Courtiers in these dayes, who for soothing shamefull and gracelesse maners in such as allow them maintenance, are called and reputed to bee Gentlemen, yea speciall favourites: whereas much more worthily, they should be accounted as knaves and villaines, being borne and bred in all filthinesse, and skilfull in every kinde of basest behaviour, not fit to come in Princes Courts. For, whereas in passed times, they spent their dayes and paines in making peace, when Gentlemen were at warre or dissention, or treating on honest marriages, betweene friends and familiars, and (with loving speeches) would recreate disturbed mindes, desiring none but commendable exercises in Court, and sharpely reprooving (like Fathers) disordred life, or ill actions in any, albeit with recompence little, or none at all; these upstarts now adayes, employ all their paines in detractions, sowing questions and quarrels betweene one another, making no spare of lyes and falshoods. Nay which is worse, they wil do this in the presence of any man, upbraiding him with injuries, shames, and scandals (true or not true) upon the very least occasion. And by false and deceitful flatteries and villanies of their owne inventing, they make Gentlemen to become as vile as themselves. For which detestable qualities, they are better beloved and respected of their misdemeanored Lords, and recompenced in more bountifull maner, then men of vertuous carriage and desert. Which is an argument sufficient, that goodnesse is gone up to heaven, and hath quite forsaken these loathed lower Regions, where men are drowned in the mud of all abhominable vices.

But returning where I left (being led out of my way by a just and religious anger against such deformity) this Gentleman, Master Guillaume Boursier, was willingly seene, and gladly welcommed by all the best men in Geneway. Having remained some few daies in the City, and amongst other matters, heard much talke of the miserable covetousnesse of master Herminio, he grew very desirous to have a sight of him. Master Herminio had already understood, that this Gentleman, Master Guillaume Boursier was vertuously disposed, and (how covetously soever hee was inclined) having in him some sparkes of noble nature, gave him very good words, and gracious entertainment, discoursing with him on divers occasions.

In company of other Genewayes with him, he brought him to a new erected house of his, a building of great cost and beauty; where, after he had shewne him all the variable rarieties, he beganne thus. Master Guillaume, no doubt but you have heard and seene many things, and you can instruct me in some queint conceit or device, to be fairly figured in painting, at the entrance into the great Hall of my House. Master Guillaume hearing him speake so simply, returned him this answer: Sir, I cannot advise you in any thing, so rare or unseene as you talk of: but how to sneeze (after a new manner) upon a full and over-cloyed stomacke, to avoyde base humours that stupifie the braine, or other matters of the like quality. But if you would be taught a good one indeede, and had a disposition to see it fairely effected, I could instruct you in an excellent Emblem, wherwith (as yet) you never came acquainted.

Master Herminio hearing him say so,

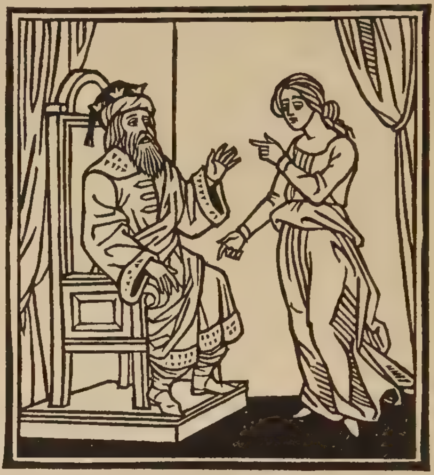
and expecting no such answer as he had, saide, Good Master Guillaume, tell me what it is, and on my faith I will have it fairely painted. Whereto Master Guillaume suddenly replied; Do nothing but this Sir: Paint over the Portall of your Halles enterance, the lively picture of Liberality, to bid all your friends better welcome, then hitherto they have beene. When Master Herminio heard these words, he becam possessed with such a sudden shame, that his complexion changed from the former palenesse, and answered thus. Master Guillaume, I will have your advice so truly figured over my gate, and shee shall give so good welcome to all my guests, that both you, and all these Gentlemen shall say, I have both seene her, and am become reasonably acquainted with her. From that time forward, the words of Master Guillaume were so effectuall with Signior Herminio, that he became the most bountifull and best house-keeper, which lived in his time in Geneway: no man more honouring and friendly welcoming both strangers and Citizens, then he continually used to do.

THE NINTH NOVELL

GIVING ALL MEN TO UNDERSTAND, THAT JUSTICE IS NECESSARY IN A KING ABOVE AL THINGS ELSE WHATSOEVER.

THE *King of Cyprus was wittily reprehended, by the words of a Gentlewoman of Gascoignie, and became vertuously altered from his vicious disposition.*

THE last command of the Queene, remained upon Madam Elissa, or Eliza, who (without any delaying) thus beganne. Young Ladies, it hath often beene seene, that much paine hath beene bestowed, and many reprehensions spent in vaine, till a word happening at adventure, and perhaps not purposely determined, hath effectually done the deede: as appeareth by the Tale of Madame Lauretta, and another of mine owne, wherewith I intend briefly to acquaint you, approving that when good words are discreetly observed, they are of soveraigne power and vertue.



In the dayes of the first King of Cyprus, after the Conquest made in the holy Land by Godfrey of Bullen, it fortuned that a Gentlewoman of Gascoignie, travelling in pilgrimage to visit the sacred Sepulcher in Jerusalem, returning home againe, arrived at Cyprus, where shee was villanously abused by certaine base wretches. Complaining thereof, without any comfort or redresse, shee intended to make her moane to the King of the Country. Whereupon it was tolde her, that therein shee should but loose her labour, because hee was so womanish, and faint-hearted; that not onely he refused to punish with justice the offence of others, but also suffered shamefull injuries done to himselfe. And therefore, such as were displeased by his negligence, might easily discharge their spleene against him, and doe him what dishonour they would.

When the Gentlewoman heard this, despairing of any consolation, or revenge for her wrongs, shee resolved to checke the Kings deniall of justice, and comming before him weeping, spake in this manner. Sir, I presume not into your presence, as hoping to have redresse by you, for divers dishonourable injuries done unto me; but, as full satisfaction for them, doe but teach me how you suffer such vile abuses, as daily are offered to your selfe. To the end, that being therein instructed by you, I may the more patiently beare mine owne; which (as God knoweth) I would bestow on you very gladly, because you know so well how to endure them.

The King, who (till then) had beene very bad, dull, and slothfull, even as sleeping out his time of governement; beganne to revenge the wrongs done to this Gentlewoman very severely, and (thence forward) became a most sharpe Justicer, for the least offence offered against the honour of his Crowne, or to any of his subjects beside.

THE TENTH NOVELL

WHEREIN IS DECLARED, THAT HONEST LOVE AGREETH WITH PEOPLE OF ALL AGES.

MASTER *Albert of Bullen, honestly made a Lady to blush, that thought to have done as much to him, because shee perceived him, to be amorously affected towards her.*

AFTER that Madam Eliza sate silent, the last charge and labour of the like employment, remained to the Queene her selfe; whereupon shee beganne thus to speake: Honest and vertuous young Ladies, like as the Starres (when the Ayre is faire and cleere) are the adorning and beauty of Heaven, and flowers (while the Spring time lasteth) doe graciously embellish the Meadowes; even so sweete speeches and pleasing conferences, to passe the time with commendable discourses, are the best habit of the minde, and an outward beauty to the body: which ornaments of words, when they appeare to be short and sweete, are much more seemely in women, then in men; because long and tedious talking (when it may be done in lesser time) is a greater blemish in women, then in men.

Among us women, this day, I thinke few or none have therein offended, but as readily have understood short and pithy speeches, as they have beene quicke and quaintly delivered. But when answering suteth not with understanding, it is generally a shame in us, and all such as live; because our moderne times have converted that vertue, which was within them who lived before us, into garments of the body, and shew whose habites were noted to bee most gaudy, fullest of imbroyderies and fantastick fashions: she was reputed to have most matter in her, and therefore to be more honoured and esteemed. Never considering, that whosoever loadeth the backe of an Asse, or puts upon him the richest braverie; he becommeth not thereby a jot the wiser, or meriteth any more honor then an Asse should have. I am ashamed to speake it, because in detecting other, I may (perhaps) as justly taxe my selfe.

Such imbroydered bodies, tricked and trimmed in such boasting bravery, are they any thing else but as Marble Statues, dumbe, dull, and utterly insensible? Or if (perchaunce) they make an answere, when some question is demanded of them; it were much better for them to be silent. For defence of honest devise and conference among men and women, they would have the world to thinke, that it proceedeth but from simplicity and precise opinion, covering their owne folly with the name of honesty: as if there were no other honest woman, but shee that conferres onely with her Chambermaide, Laundresse, or Kitchin-woman: as if nature had allowed them, (in their owne idle conceite) no other kinde of talking.

Most true it is, that as there is a respect to be used in the action of other things; so, time and place are necessarily to be considered, and also whom we converse withall; because sometimes it happeneth, that a man or woman, intending (by a word of jest and merriment) to make another body blush or be ashamed: not knowing what strength of wit remaineth in the opposite, doe convert the same disgrace upon themselves. Therefore, that we may the more advisedly stand upon our owne guard, and to prevent the common proverbe, *That Women (in all things) make choyse of the worst:* I desire that this dayes last tale, which is to come from my selfe, may make us all wise. To the end, that as in gentlenesse of minde we conferre with other; so by excellency in good manners, we may shew our selves not inferiour to them.

It is not many yeares since (worthy assembly) that in Bulloigne there dwelt a learned Physitian, a man famous for skill, and farre renowned, whose name was Master Albert, and being growne aged, to the estimate of threescore and tenne yeares: hee had yet such a sprightly disposition, that though naturall heate and vigour had quite shaken hands with him, yet amorous flames and desires had not wholly forsaken him. Having seene (at a Banquet) a very beautifull woman, being then in the estate of widdowhood, named (as some say) Madam Margaret de Chisolieri, shee appeared so pleasing in his eye; that his sences became no lesse disturbed, then as if he had beene of farre younger temper, and no night could any quietnesse possesse his soule, except (the day before) he had seene the sweet countenance of this lovely widdow. In regard whereof, his dayly passage was by her doore, one while on horsebacke, and then againe on foot; as best might declare his plaine purpose to see her.

Both shee and other Gentlewomen, perceiving the occasion of his passing and repassing; would privately jest thereat together, to see a man of such yeares and discretion, to be amorously addicted, or over-swayed by effeminate passions. For they were partly perswaded, that such wanton Ague fits of Love, were fit for none but youthfull apprehensions, as best agreeing with their chearefull complexion. Master Albert continuing his dayly walkes by the widdowes lodging, it chaunced upon a Feastivall day, that shee (accompanied with divers other women of great account) being sitting at her doore; espied Master Albert (farre off) comming thitherward, and a resolved determination among themselves was set downe, to allow him favourable entertainement, and to jest (in some merry manner) at his loving folly, as afterward they did indeede.

No sooner was he come neere, but they all arose, and courteously invited him to enter with them, conducting him into a goodly Garden, where readily was prepared choyse of delicate wines and banquetting. At length, among other pleasant and delightfull discourses, they demanded of him; how it was possible for him, to be amorously affected towards so beautifull a woman, both knowing and seeing, how earnestly she was sollicited by many gracious, gallant, and youthfull spirits, aptly suting with her yeares and desires? Master Albert perceiving, that they had drawne him in among them, onely to scoffe and make a mockery of him; set a merry countenance on the matter, and honestly thus answered.

Beleeve mee Gentlewoman (speaking to the widdowe her selfe) it should not appeare strange to any of wisedome and discretion, that I am amorously enclined, and especially to you, because you are well worthy of it. And although those powers, which naturally appertaine to the exercises of Love, are bereft and gone from aged people; yet good will thereto cannot be taken from them, neither judgement to know such as deserve to be affected: for, by how much they exceede youth in knowledge and experience, by so much the more hath nature made them meet for respect and reverence. The hope which incited me (being aged) to love you, that are affected of so many youthfull Gallants, grew thus. I have often chaunced into divers places, where I have seene Ladies and Gentlwomen, being disposed to a Collation or rerebanquet after dinner, to feede on Lupines, and young Onions or Leekes, and although it may be so, that there is little or no goodnesse at all in them; yet the heads of them are least hurtfull, and most pleasing in the mouth. And you Gentlewomen generally (guided by unreasonable appetite) will hold the heads of them in your hands, and feede upon the blades or stalkes: which not onely are not good for any thing, but also are of very bad savour. And what know I (Lady) whether among the choise of friends, it may fit your fancy to doe the like? For, if you did so, it were no fault of mine to be chosen of you, but thereby were all the rest of your suters the sooner answered.

The widdowed Gentlewoman, and all the rest in her company, being bashfully ashamed of her owne and their folly, presently said. Master Albert, you have both well and worthily chastised our over-bold presumption, and beleeve me Sir, I repute your love and kindnesse of no meane merrit, comming from a man so wise and vertuous: And therefore (mine honour reserved) commaund my uttermost, as alwayes ready to do you any honest service. Master Albert, arising from his seat, thanking the faire widdow for her gentle offer; tooke leave of her and all the company, and she blushing, as all the rest were therein not much behinde her, thinking to checke him, became chidden her selfe, whereby (if we be wise) let us all take warning.

The Sunne was now somewhat farre declined, and the heates extremity well worne away: when the Tales of the seaven Ladies and three Gentlemen were thus finished, whereupon their Queene pleasantly said. For this day (faire company) there remaineth nothing more to be done under my regiment, but onely to bestow a new Queene upon you, who (according to her judgement) must take her turne, and dispose what next is to be done, for continuing our time in honest pleasure. And although the day should endure till darke night; in regard, that when some time is taken before, the better preparation may bee made for occasions to follow, to the end also, that whatsoever the new Queene shall please to appoint, may be the better fitted for the morrow: I am of opinion, that at the same houre as we now cease, the following dayes shall severally begin. And therefore, in reverence to him that giveth life to all things, and in hope of comfort by our second day; Madam Philomena, a most wise young Lady, shall governe as Queene this our Kingdome.

So soone as she had thus spoken, arising from her seate of dignity, and taking the Lawrell Crowne from off her owne head; she reverently placed it upon Madam Philomenaes, shee first of all humbly saluting her, and then all the rest, openly confessing her to be their Queene, made gracious offer to obey whatsoever she commanded. Philomena, her cheekes delivering a scarlet tincture, to see her selfe thus honoured as their Queene, and well remembring the words, so lately uttered by Madam Pampinea; that dulnesse or neglect might not be noted in her, tooke cheerefull courage to her, and first of all, she confirmed the officers, which Pampinea had appointed the day before, then she ordained for the morrowes provision, as also for the supper so neere approaching, before they departed away from thence, and then thus began.

Lovely Companions, although that Madam Pampinea, more in her owne courtesie, then any matter of merit remaining in me, hath made me your Queene: I am not determined, to alter the forme of our intended life, nor to be guided by mine owne judgement, but to associate the same with your assistance. And because you may know what I intend to do, and so (consequently) adde or diminish at your pleasure; in very few words, you shall plainly understand my meaning. If you have well considered on the course, which this day hath bene kept by Madam Pampinea, me thinkes it hath bene very pleasing and commendable; in which regard, untill by over-tedious continuation, or other occasions of irkesome offence, it shall seeme injurious, I am of the minde, not to alter it. Holding on the order then as we have begun to doe, we will depart from hence to recreate our selves a while, and when the Sun groweth towards setting, we will sup in the fresh and open ayre; afterward, with Canzonets and other pastimes, we will out-weare the houres till bed time. To morrow morning, in the fresh and gentle breath thereof, we will rise and walke to such places, as every one shall finde fittest for them, even as already this day we have done; untill due time shall summon us hither againe, to continue our discoursive Tales, wherein (me thinkes) consisteth both pleasure and profit, especially by discreete observation.

Very true it is, that some things which Madam Pampinea could not accomplish, by reason of her so small time of authority, I will begin to undergo, to wit, in restraining some matters whereon we are to speake, that better premeditation may passe upon them. For, when respite and a little leysure goeth before them, each discourse will savour of the more formality; and if it might so please you, thus would I direct the order. As since the beginning of the world, all men have bene guided (by Fortune) thorow divers accidents and occasions: so beyond all hope and expectation, the issue and successe hath bin good and successful, and accordingly should every one of our arguments be chosen.

The Ladies, and the yong Gentlemen likewise, commended her advice, and promised to imitate it; onely Dioneus excepted, who when every one was silent, spake thus. Madam, I say as all the rest have done, that the order by you appointed, is most pleasing and worthy to bee allowed. But I intreate one speciall favour for my selfe, and to have it confirmed to mee, so long as our company continueth; namely, that I may not be constrained to this Law of direction, but to tell my Tale at liberty, after mine owne minde, and according to the freedome first instituted. And because no one shall imagine, that I urge this grace of you, as being unfurnished of discourses in this kinde, I am well contented to bee the last in every dayes exercise.

The Queene, knowing him to be a man full of mirth and matter, began to consider very advisedly, that he would not have mooved this request, but onely to the end, that if the company grew wearied by any of the Tales re-counted, hee would shut up the dayes disport with some mirthfull accident. Wherefore willingly, and with consent of all the rest he had his suite granted. So, arising all, they walked to a Christall river, descending downe a little hill into a valley, graciously shaded with goodly Trees; where washing both their hands and feete, much pretty pleasure passed among them; till supper time drawing neere, made them returne home to the Palace. When supper was ended, and bookes and instruments being laide before them, the Queene commanded a dance, and that Madam Æmilia, assisted by Madam Lauretta and Dioneus, should sing a sweet ditty. At which command, Lauretta undertooke the dance, and led it, Æmilia singing this song ensuing.

THE SONG

So much delight my beauty yeelds to mee,
That any other Love,
To wish or prove;
Can never sute it selfe with my desire.

Therein I see, upon good observation,
What sweet content due understanding lends:
Old or new thoughts cannot in any fashion
Rob me of that, which mine owne soule commends.

What object then,
(mongst infinites of men)
Can I never finde
to dispossesse my minde,
And plaint therein another new desire?
So much delight, etc.

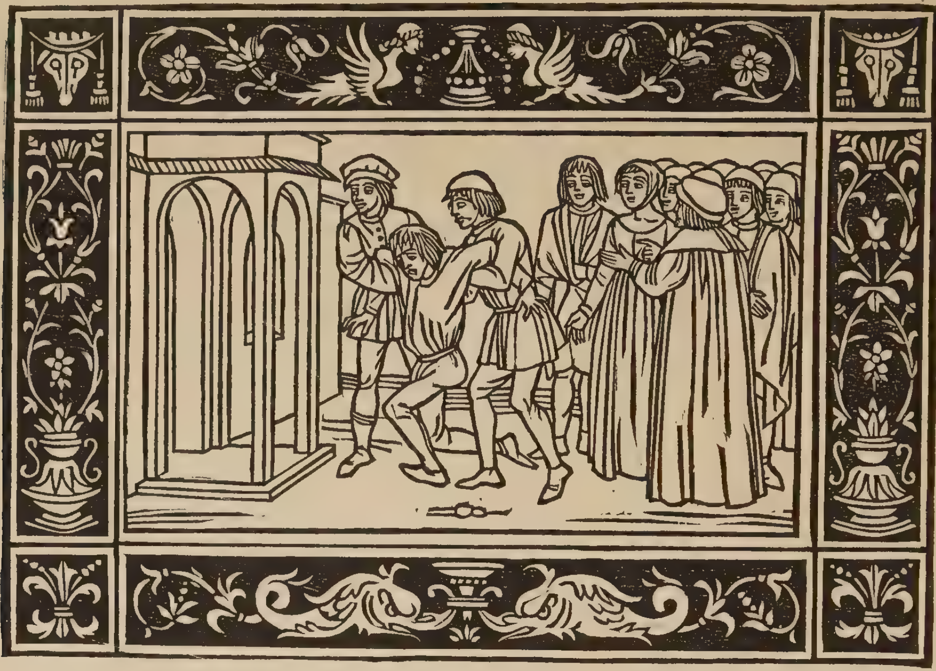
But were it so, the blisse that I would chuse,
Is, by continuall sight to comfort me:
So rare a presence never to refuse,
Which mortall tongue or thought, what ere it be
Must still conceale,
not able to reveale,
Such a sacred sweete,
for none other meete,
But hearts enflamed with the same desire.
So much delight, etc.

The Song being ended, the Chorus whereof was answered by them all, it passed with generall applause: and after a few other daunces, the night being well run on, the Queene gave ending to this first dayes Recreation. So, lights being brought, they departed to their severall Lodgings, to take their rest till the next morning.

THE INDUCTION TO THE SECOND DAY

WHEREIN, ALL THE DISCOURSES ARE UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF MADAM PHILOMENA: CONCERNING SUCH MEN OR WOMEN, AS (IN DIVERS ACCIDENTS) HAVE BEEN MUCH MOLLESTED BY FORTUNE, AND YET AFTERWARD (CONTRARY TO THEIR HOPE AND EXPECTATION) HAVE HAD A HAPPY AND SUCCESSEFULL DELIVERANCE.

ALREADY had the bright Sunne renewed the day every where with his splendant beames, and the Birds sate merrily singing on the blooming branches, yeelding testimony thereof to the eares of all hearers; when the seven Ladies, and the three Gentlemen (after they were risen) entered the Gardens, and there spent some time in walking, as also making of Nose-gayes and Chaplets of Flowers. And even as they had done the day before, so did they now follow the same course; for, after they had dined, in a coole and pleasing aire they fell to dancing, and then went to sleepe a while, from which being awaked, they tooke their places (according as it pleased the Queene to appoint) in the same faire Meadow about her. And she, being a goodly creature, and highly pleasing to behold, having put on her Crowne of Lawrell, and giving a gracious countenance to the whole company; commanded Madam Neiphila that her Tale should begin this daies delight. Whereupon she, without returning any excuse or deniall, began in this manner.



WHEREIN IS SIGNIFIED, HOW EASIE A THING IT IS, FOR WICKED MEN TO DECEIVE THE WORLD, UNDER THE SHADOW AND COLOUR OF MIRACLES: AND THAT SUCH TREACHERY (OFTENTIMES) REDOUNDETH TO THE HARME OF THE DEVISER.

MARTELLINO *counterfeitting to be lame of his members, caused himselfe to be set on the body of Saint Arriguo, where he made shew of his sudden recovery; but when his dissimulation was discovered, he was well beaten, being afterward taken prisoner, and in great danger of being hanged and strangled by the necke, and yet he escaped in the end.*

FAIRE Ladies, it hath happened many times, that he who striveth to scorne and floute other men, and especially in occasions deserving to be respected, proveth to mocke himselfe with the selfe same matter, yea, and to his no meane danger beside. As you shall perceive by a Tale, which I intend to tell you, obeying therein the command of our Queene, and according to the subject by her enjoyned. In which discourse, you may first observe, what great mischance happened to one of our Citizens; and yet afterward, how (beyond all hope) he happily escaped.

Not long since, there lived in the City of Trevers, an Almaine or Germaine, named Arriguo, who being a poore man, served as a Porter, or burden-bearer for money, when any man pleased to employ him. And yet, notwithstanding his poore and meane condition, he was generally reputed, to be of good and sanctified life. In which regard (whether it were true or no, I know not) it happened, that when he died (at least as the men of Trevers themselves affirmed) in the very instant houre of his departing, all the Belles in the great Church of Trevers, (not being pulled by the helpe of any hand) beganne to ring: which being accounted for a miracle, every one saide; that this Arriguo had bene, and was a Saint. And presently all the people of the City ran to the house where the dead body lay, and carried it (as a sanctified body) into the great Church, where people, halt, lame, and blind, or troubled with any other diseases, were brought about it, even as if every one should forth-with be holpen, onely by their touching the body.

It came to passe, that in so great a concourse of people, as resorted thither from all parts; three of our Citizens went to Trevers, one of them being named Stechio, the second Martellino, and the third Marquiso, all being men of such condition, as frequented Princes Courts, to give them delight by pleasant and counterfetted qualities. None of these men having ever beene at Trevers before, seeing how the people crowded thorow the streetes, wondered greatly thereat: but when they knew the reason why the throngs ranne on heapes in such sort together, they grew as desirous to see the Shrine, as any of the rest. Having ordered all affaires at their lodging, Marquiso saide; It is fit for us to see this Saint, but I know not how we shall attaine thereto, because (as I have heard) the place is guarded by Germaine Souldiers, and other warlike men, commanded thither by the Governour of this City, least any outrage should be there committed: And beside, the Church is so full of people, as we shall never compasse to get neere. Martellino being also as forward in desire to see it, presently replied. All this difficulty cannot dismay me, but I will go to the very body of the Saint it selfe. But how? quoth Marquiso. I will tell thee, answered Martellino. I purpose to go in the disguise of an impotent lame person, supported on the one side by thy selfe, and on the other by Stechio, as if I were not able to walke of my selfe: And you two thus sustaining me, desiring to come neere the Saint to cure me; every one will make way, and freely give you leave to go on.

This devise was very pleasing to Marquiso and Stechio, so that (without any further delaying) they all three left their lodging, and resorting into a secret corner aside, Martellino so writhed and mishaped his hands, fingers, and armes, his legges, mouth, eyes, and whole countenance, that it was a dreadfull sight to looke upon him, and whosoever beheld him, would verily have imagined, that hee was utterly lame of his limbes, and greatly deformed in his body. Marquiso and Stechio, seeing all sorted so well as they could wish, tooke and led him towards the Church, making very pitious moane, and humbly desiring (for Gods sake) of every one that they met, to grant them free passage: whereto they charitably condiscended.

Thus leading him on, crying; Beware there before, and give way for Gods sake, they arrived at the body of Saint Arriguo, that (by his helpe) he might be healed. And while all eyes were diligently observing, what miracle would be wrought on Martellino, he having sitten a small space upon the Saints body, and being sufficiently skilfull in counterfeiting, began first to extend forth the one of his fingers, next his hand, then his arme, and so (by degrees) the rest of his body. Which when the people saw, they made such a wonderfull noyse in praise of Saint Arriguo, even as if it had thundered in the Church.

Now it chanced by ill fortune, that there stood a Florentine neere to the body, who knew Martellino very perfectly; but appearing so monstrously mishapen, when he was brought into the Church, hee could take no knowledge of him. But when he saw him stand up and walke, hee knew him then to be the man indeede; whereupon he saide. How commeth it to passe, that this fellow should be so miraculously cured, that never truly was any way impotent? Certaine men of the City hearing these words, entred into further questioning with him, demanding, how he knew that the man had no such imperfection? Well enough (answered the

Florentine) I know him to be as direct in his limbes and body, as you; I, or any of us all are: but indeede, he knowes better how to dissemble counterfet trickes, then any man else that ever I saw.

When they heard this, they discoursed no further with the Florentine, but pressed on mainely to the place where Martellino stood, crying out aloude. Lay hold on this Traytor, a mocker of God, and his holy Saints, that had no lamenesse in his limbes; but to make a mocke of our Saint and us, came hither in false and counterfeit manner. So laying hands uppon him, they threw him against the ground, having him by the haire on his head, and tearing the garments from his backe, spurning him with their feete, and beating him with their fists, that many were much ashamed to see it.

Poore Martellino was in a pittifull case, crying out for mercy, but no man would heare him; for, the more he cryed, the more still they did beat him, as meaning to leave no life in him: which Stechio and Marquiso seeing, considered with themselves, that they were likewise in a desperate case; and therefore, fearing to be as much misused, they cryed out among the rest, Kill the counterfet knave, lay on loade, and spare him not; neverthelesse, they tooke care how to get him out of the peoples handes, as doubting, least they would kill him indeede, by their extreame violence.

Sodainly, Marquiso bethought him how to do it, and proceeded thus. All the Sergeants for Justice standing at the Church doore, hee ran with all possible speede to the Potestates Lieutenant, and said unto him. Good my Lord Justice, helpe me in an hard case; yonder is a villaine that hath cut my purse, I desire he may bee brought before you, that I may have my money againe. He hearing this, sent for a dozen of the Sergeants, who went to apprehend unhappy Martellino, and recover him from the peoples fury, leading him on with them to the Palace, no meane crowds thronging after him, when they heard that he was accused to bee a Cutpurse. Now durst they meddle no more with him, but assisted the Officers; some of them charging him in like manner, that hee had cut their purses also.

Upon these clamours and complaints, the Potestates Lieutenant (being a man of rude quality) tooke him sodainly aside, and examined him of the crimes wherewith he was charged. But Martellino, as making no account of these accusations, laughed, and returned scoffing answeres. Whereat the Judge, waxing much displeased, delivered him over to the Strappado, and stood by himselfe, to have him confesse the crimes imposed on him, and then to hang him afterward. Being let downe to the ground, the Judge still demaunded of him, whether the accusations against him were true, or no? Affirming, that it nothing avayled him to deny it: whereupon hee thus spake to the Judge. My Lord, I am heere ready before you, to confesse the truth; but I pray you, demaund of all them that accuse me, when and where I did cut their purses, and then I wil tell you that, which (as yet) I have not done, otherwise I purpose to make you no more answers.

Well (quoth the Judge) thou requirest but reason; and calling divers of the accusers, one of them saide, that he lost his purse eight dayes before; another saide six, another foure, and some saide the very same day. Which Martellino hearing, replyed. My Lord, they all lie in their throats, as I will plainly prove before you. I would to God I had never set foot within this City, as it is not many houres since my first entrance, and presently after mine arrivall, I went (in evill houre I may say for me) to see the Saints body, where I was thus beaten as you may beholde. That all this is true which I say unto you, the Seigneurie Officer that keeps your Booke of presentations, will testifie for me, as also the Host where I am lodged. Wherefore good my Lord, if you finde all no otherwise, then as I have said, I humbly entreate you, that upon these bad mens reportes and false informations, I may not be thus tormented, and put in perill of my life.

While matters proceeded in this manner, Marquiso and Stechio, understanding how roughly the Potestates Lieutenant dealt with Martellino, and that he had already given him the Strappado; were in heavy perplexity, saying to themselves; we have carried this businesse very badly, redeeming him out of the Frying-pan, and flinging him into the fire. Whereupon, trudging about from place to place, and meeting at length with their Host, they told him truly how all had happened, whereat hee could not refraine from laughing. Afterward, he went with them to one Master Alexander Agolante, who dwelt in Trevers, and was in great credite with the Cities cheefe Magistrate, to whom hee related the whole Discourse; all three earnestly entreating him, to commisserate the case of poore Martellino.

Master Alexander, after he had laughed heartily at this hotte peece of service, went with him to the Lord of Trevers; prevailing so well with him, that he sent to have Martellino brought before him. The Messengers that went for him, found him standing in his shirt before the Judge, very shrewdly shaken with the Strappado, trembling and quaking pitifully. For the Judge would not heare any thing in his excuse; but hating him (perhaps) because hee was a Florentine: flatly determined to have him hanged by the necke, and would not deliver him to the Lord, untill in meere despight he was compeld to do it.

The Lord of Trevers, when Martellino came before him, and had acquainted him truly with every particular: Master Alexander requested, that he might be dispatched thence for Florence, because he thought the halter to be about his necke, and that there was no other helpe but hanging. The Lord, smiling (a long while) at the accident, and causing Martellino to be handsomely apparrelled, delivering them also his Passe, they escaped out of further danger, and tarried no where, till they came unto Florence.

THE SECOND NOVELL

WHEREBY WEE MAY LEARNE, THAT SUCH THINGS AS SOMETIME SEEME HURTFULL TO US, MAY TURNE TO OUR BENEFIT AND COMMODITY.

RINALDO *de Este, after hee was robbed by Theeves, arrived at Chasteau Guillaume, where he was friendly lodged by a faire Widdow, and recompenced likewise for all his losses; returning afterward safe and well home unto his owne house.*

MUCH merriment was among the Ladies, hearing this Tale of Martellinos misfortunes, so familiarly reported by Madam Neiphila, and of the men, it was best respected by Philostratus, who sitting neerest unto Neiphila, the Queene commanded his Tale to be the next, when presently he began to speake thus.

Gracious Ladies, I am to speake of universall occasions, mingled with some misfortunes in part, and partly with matters leaning to love, as many times may happen to such people, that trace the dangerous pathes of amorous desires, or have not learned perfectly, to say S. Julians *pater noster,* having good beddes of their owne, yet casually meete with worser Lodging.

In the time of Azzo, Marquesse of Ferrara, there was a Marchant named Rinaldo de Este, who being one day at Bologna, about some especiall businesse of his owne; his occasions there ended, and riding from thence towards Verona, he fell in company with other Horsemen, seeming to be Merchants like himselfe, but indeede were Theeves, men of most badde life and conversation; yet he having no such mistrust of them, rode on, conferring with them very familiarly. They perceiving him to be a Merchant, and likely to have some store of money about him, concluded betweene themselves to rob him, so soone as they found apt place and opportunity. But because he should conceive no such suspition, they rode on like modest men, talking honestly and friendly with him, of good parts and disposition appearing in him, offering him all humble and gracious service, accounting themselves happy by his companie, as hee returned the same courtesie to them, because hee was alone, and but one servant with him.

Falling from one discourse to another, they beganne to talke of such prayers, as men (in journey) use to salute God withall; and one of the Theeves (they being three in number) spake thus to Rinaldo. Sir, let it be no offence to you, that I desire to know, what prayer you most use when thus you travell on the way? Whereto Rinaldo replyed in this manner. To tell you true Sir, I am a man grosse enough in such Divine matters, as medling more with Merchandize, then I do with Bookes. Neverthelesse, at all times when I am thus in journey, in the morning before I depart my Chamber, I say a *Pater noster,* and an *Ave Maria* for the soules of the father and mother of Saint Julian; and after that, I pray God and S. Julian to send me a good lodging at night. And let me tell you Sir, that very oftentimes heeretofore, I have met with many great dangers upon the way, from all which I still escaped, and evermore (when night drew on) I came to an exceeding good Lodging. Which makes mee firmely beleeve, that Saint Julian (in honour of whom I speake it) hath beggd of God such great grace for me; and mee thinkes, that if any day I should faile of this prayer in the morning: I cannot travaile securely, nor come to a good lodging. No doubt then Sir (quoth the other) but you have saide that prayer this morning? I would be sory else, said Rinaldo, such an especiall matter is not to be neglected.

He and the rest, who had already determined how to handle him before they parted, saide within themselves: Look thou hast said thy praier, for when we have thy money, Saint Julian and thou shift for thy lodging. Afterward, the same man thus againe conferd with him. As you Sir, so I have ridden many journies, and yet I never used any such prayer, although I have heard it very much commended, and my lodging hath proved never the worser. Perhaps this verie night will therein resolve us both, whether of us two shall be the best lodged, you that have saide the Prayer, or I that never used it at all. But I must not deny, that in sted thereof, I have made use of some verses; as *Dirupisti,* or the *Intemerata,* or *De profundis,* which are (as my Grandmother hath often told mee) of very great vertue and efficacy.

Continuing thus in talke of divers things, winning way, and beguiling the time, still waiting when their purpose should sort to effect: it fortuned, that the Theeves seeing they were come neere to a Towne, called Chasteau Guillaume, by the foord of a River, the houre somewhat late, the place solitarie, and thickely shaded with Trees, they made their assault; and having robd him, left him there on foote, stript into his shirt, saying to him. Goe now and see, whether thy Saint Julian will allow thee this night a good lodging, or no, for our owne we are sufficiently provided; so passing the River, away they rode. Rinaldoes servant, seeing his Master so sharply assayled, like a wicked villaine, would not assist him in any sort: but giving his horse the spurres, never left gallopping, untill hee came to Chasteau Guillaume, where hee entred upon the point of night, providing himselfe of a lodging, but not caring what became of his Master.

Rinaldo remaining there in his shirt, bare-foot and bare-legged, the weather extremely colde, and snowing incessantly, not knowing what to doe, darke night drawing on, and looking round about him, for some place where to abide that night, to the end he might not dye with colde: he found no helpe at all there for him, in regard that (no long while before) the late warre had burnt and wasted all, and not so much as the least Cottage left. Compelled by the coldes violence, his teeth quaking, and all his body trembling, hee trotted on towards Chausteau Guillaume, not knowing, whether his man was gone thither or no, or to what place else: but perswaded himselfe, that if he could get entrance, there was no feare of finding succour. But before he came within halfe a mile of the Towne, the night grew extreamely darke, and arriving there so late, hee found the gates fast lockt, and the Bridges drawne up, so that no entrance might be admitted.

Grieving greatly heereat, and being much discomforted, rufully hee went spying about the walls, for some place wherein to shrowd himselfe, at least, to keepe the snow from falling upon him. By good hap, hee espied an house upon the wall of the Towne, which had a terrace jutting out as a penthouse, under which he purposed to stand all the night, and then to get him gone in the morning. At length, hee found a doore in the wall, but very fast shut, and some small store of strawe lying by it, which he gathered together, and sitting downe thereon very pensively; made many sad complaints to Saint Julian, saying: This was not according to the trust he reposed in her. But Saint Julian, taking compassion upon him, without any over-long tarying; provided him of a good lodging, as you shall heare how.

In this towne of Chasteau Guillaume, lived a young Lady, who was a widdow, so beautifull and comely of her person, as sildome was seene a more lovely creature. The Marquesse Azzo most dearely affected her, and (as his choysest Jewell of delight) gave her that house to live in, under the terrace whereof poore Rinaldo made his shelter. It chaunced the day before, that the Marquesse was come thither, according to his frequent custome, to weare away that night in her company, she having secretly prepared a Bath for him, and a costly supper beside. All things being ready, and nothing wanting but the Marquesse his presence: suddenly a Post brought him such Letters, which commanded him instantly to horsebacke, and word hee sent to the Lady, to spare him for that night, because urgent occasions called him thence, and hee rode away immediately.

Much discontented was the Lady at this unexpected accident, and not knowing now how to spend the time, resolved to use the Bath which shee had made for the Marquesse, and (after supper) betake her selfe to rest, and so she entred into the Bath. Close to the doore where poore Rinaldo sate, stoode the Bath, by which meanes, shee being therein, heard all his quivering moanes, and complaints, seeming to be such, as the Swanne singing before her death: whereupon, shee called her Chamber-maide, saying to her. Goe up above, and looke over the terrace on the wall downe to this doore, and see who is there, and what he doth. The Chamber-maide went up aloft, and by a little glimmering in the ayre, she saw a man sitting in his shirt, bare on feete and legges, trembling in manner before rehearsed. She demanding of whence, and what he was; Rinaldoes teeth so trembled in his head, as very hardly could he forme any words, but (so well as he could) told her what he was, and how he came thither: most pittifully entreating her, that if she could affoord him any helpe, not to suffer him to starve there to death with cold.

The Chamber-maide, being much moved to compassion, returned to her Lady, and tolde her all; she likewise pittying his distresse, and remembring shee had the key of that doore, whereby the Marquesse both entred and returned, when he intended not to be seene of any, said to her Maide. Goe, and open the doore softly for him; we have a good supper, and none to helpe to eate it, and if he be a man likely, we can allow him one nights lodging too. The Chamber-maide, commending her Lady for this charitable kindnesse, opened the doore, and seeing hee appeared as halfe frozen, shee said unto him. Make hast good man, get thee into this Bath, which yet is good and warme, for my Lady her selfe came but newly out of it. Whereto very gladly he condiscended, as not tarrying to be bidden twise; finding himselfe so singularly comforted with the heate thereof, even as if hee had beene restored from death to life. Then the Lady sent him garments, which lately were her deceased husbands, and fitted him so aptly in all respects, as if purposely they had beene made for him.

Attending in further expectation, to know what else the Lady would commaund him; hee began to remember God and Saint Julian, hartily thanking her, for delivering him from so bad a night as was threatned towards him, and bringing him to so good entertainment. After all this, the Lady causing a faire fire to be made in the neerest Chamber beneath, went and sate by it her selfe, demaunding how the honest man fared. Madame, answered the Chambermaide, now that he is in your deceased Lords garments, he appeareth to be a very goodly Gentleman, and (questionlesse) is of respective birth and breeding, well deserving this gracious favour which you have affoorded him. Goe then (quoth the Lady) and conduct him hither, to sit by this fire, and sup heere with mee, for I feare he hath had but a sorrie supper. When Rinaldo was entred into the Chamber, and beheld her to be such a beautifull Lady, accounting his fortune to exceede all comparison, he did her most humble reverence, expressing so much thankefulnesse as possibly he could, for this her extraordinary grace and favour.

The Lady fixing a stedfast eye upon him, well liking his gentle language and behaviour, perceiving also, how fitly her deceased husbands apparell was formed to his person, and resembling him in all familiar respects, he appeared (in her judgement) farre beyond the Chambermaides commendations of him; so praying him to sit downe by her before the fire, she questioned with him, concerning this unhappy nights accident befalne him, wherein he fully resolved her, and shee was the more perswaded, by reason of his servants comming into the Towne before night, assuring him, that he should be found for him early in the morning.

Supper being served in to the Table, and hee seated according as the Lady commanded; shee began to observe him very considerately; for he was a goodly man, compleate in all perfection of person, a delicate pleasing countenance, a quicke alluring eye, fixed and constant, not wantonly gadding, in the joviall youthfulnesse of his time, and truest temper for amorous apprehension; all these were as battering engines against a Bulwarke of no strong resistance, and wrought strangely upon her flexible affections. And though shee fed heartily, as occasion constrained, yet her thoughts had entertained a new kinde of diet, digested onely by the eye; yet so cunningly concealed, that no motive to immodesty could be discerned. Her mercy thus extended to him in misery, drew on (by Table discourse) his birth, education, parents, friends, and alies; his wealthy possessions by Merchandize, and a sound stability in his estate, but above all (and best of all) the single and sole condition of a batcheler; an apt and easie steele to strike fire, especially upon such quicke taking tinder, and in a time favoured by Fortune.

No imbarment remained, but remembrance of the Marquesse, and that being summoned to her more advised consideration, her youth and beauty stood up as conscious accusers, for blemishing her honour and faire repute, with lewd and luxurious life, far unfit for a Lady of her degree, and well worthy of generall condemnation. What should I further say? upon a short conference with her Chamber-maide, repentance for sinne past, and solemne promise of a constant conversion, thus shee delivered her minde to Rinaldo.

Sir, as you have related your Fortunes to mee, by this your casuall happening hither, if you can like the motion so well as shee that makes it, my deceased Lord and Husband living so perfectly in your person; this house, and all mine is yours; and of a widdow I will become your wife, except (unmanly) you deny me. Rinaldo hearing these words, and proceeding from a Lady of such absolute perfections, presuming upon so proud an offer, and condemning himselfe of folly if he should refuse it, thus replied. Madam, considering that I stand bound for ever heereafter, to confesse that you are the gracious preserver of my life, and I no way able to returne requitall; if you please so to shadow mine insufficiencie, and to accept me and my fairest fortunes to doe you service: let me die before a thought of deniall, or any way to yeeld you the least discontentment.

Heere wanted but a Priest to joyne their hands, as mutuall affection already had done their hearts, which being sealed with infinit kisses, the Chamber-maide called up Friar Roger her Confessor, and wedding and bedding were both effected before the bright morning. In breefe, the Marquesse having heard of the marriage, did not mislike it, but confirmed it by great and honourable giftes; and having sent for his dishonest Servant, he dispatched him (after sound reprehension) to Ferrara, with Letters to Rinaldoes Father and Friends, of all the accidents that had befalne him. Moreover, the very same morning, the three Theeves that had robbed, and so ill intreated Rinaldo, for another facte by them the same night committed, were taken, and brought to the Towne of Chasteau Guillaume, where they were hanged for their offences, and Rinaldo with his wife rode to Ferrara.

THE THIRD NOVELL

WHEREIN IS DECLARED THE DANGERS OF PRODIGALITIE, AND THE MANIFOLD MUTABILITIES OF FORTUNE.

THREE *young Gentlemen, being Brethren, and having spent all their Lands and possessions vainely, became poore. A Nephew of theirs (falling almost into as desperate a condition) became acquainted with an Abbot, whom he afterward found to be the King of Englands Daughter, and made him her Husband in mariage, recompencing all his Uncles losses, and seating them againe in good estate.*

THE fortunes of Rinaldo de Este, being heard by the Ladies and Gentlemen, they admired his happinesse, and commended his devotion to Saint Julian, who (in such extreame necessity) sent him so good succour. Nor was the Lady to be blamed, for leaving base liberty, and converting to the chaste embraces of the marriage bed, the dignity of Womens honour, and eternall disgrace living otherwise. While thus they descanted on the happy night betweene her and Rinaldo, Madam Pampinea sitting next to Philostratus, considering, that her Discourse must follow in order, and thinking on what shee was to say; the Queene had no sooner sent out her command, but she being no lesse faire then forward, began in this manner.

Ladies of great respect, the more we conferre on the accidents of Fortune, so much the more remaineth to consider on her mutabilities, wherein there is no need of wonder, if discreetly we observe that al such things as we fondly tearme to be our owne, are in her power, and so (consequently) change from one to another, without any stay or arrest (according to her concealed judgement) or setled order (at least) that can bee knowne to us. Now, although these things appeare thus dayly to us, even apparantly in all occasions, and as hath beene discerned by some of our precedent Discourses; yet notwithstanding, seeing it pleaseth the Queene, that our arguments should aime at these ends, I will adde to the former tales another of my owne, perhaps not unprofitable for the hearers, nor unpleasing in observation.

Sometime heeretofore, there dwelt in our Cittie, a Knight named Signior Theobaldo, who (according as some report) issued from the Family of Lamberti, but others derive him of the Agolanti; guiding (perhaps) their opinion heerein, more from the traine of Children, belonging to the saide Theobaldo (evermore equall to that of the Agolanti) then any other matter else. But setting aside from which of these two houses he came, I say, that in his time he was a very wealthy Knight, and had three sonnes; the first being named Lamberto, the second Theobaldo, and the third Agolanto, all goodly and gracefull youths: howbeit, the eldest had not compleated eighteene yeares, when Signior Theobaldo the Father deceased, who left them all his goods and inheritances. And they, seeing themselves rich in ready monies and revennewes, without any other governement then their owne voluntary disposition, kept no restraint upon their expences, but maintained many servants, and store of unvalewable Horses, beside Hawkes and Hounds, with open house for all commers; and not onely all delights else fit for Gentlemen, but what vanities beside best agreed with their wanton and youthfull appetites.

Not long had they run on this race, but the Treasures lefte them by their Father, began greatly to diminish; and their Revennewes suffised not, to support such lavish expences as they had begun: but they fell to engaging and pawning their inheritances, selling one to day, and another to morrow, so that they saw themselves quickely come to nothing, and then poverty opened their eyes, which prodigality had before clozed up. Heereupon, Lamberto (on a day) calling his Brethren to him, shewed them what the honors of their Father had beene, to what height his wealth amounted, and now to what an ebbe of poverty it was falne, only thorow their inordinate expences. Wherefore hee counselled them, (as best he could) before further misery insulted over them, to make sale of the small remainder that was left, and then to betake themselves unto some other abiding, where fairer Fortune might chance to shine uppon them.

This advice prevailed with them; and so, without taking leave of any body, or other solemnity then closest secrecie, they departed from Florence, not tarrying in any place untill they were arrived in England. Comming to the City of London, and taking there a small house upon yearely rent, living on so little charge as possibly might be, they began to lend out money at use: wherein Fortune was so favourable to them, that (in few yeares) they had gathered a great summe of mony: by means whereof it came to passe, that one while one of them, and afterward another, returned backe againe to Florence: where, with those summes, a great part of their inheritances were redeemed, and many other bought beside. Linking themselves in marriage, and yet continuing their usances in England; they sent a Nephew of theirs thither, named Alessandro, a yong man, and of faire demeanor, to maintaine their stocke in employment: while they three remained stil in Florence, and growing forgetful of their former misery, fell againe into as unreasonable expences as ever, never respecting their houshold charges, because they had good credite among the Merchants, and the monies still sent from Alessandro, supporting their expences divers yeeres.

The dealings of Alessandro in England grew verie great, for hee lent out much money to many Gentlemen, Lords, and Barons of the Land, upon engagement of their Mannors; Castles, and other revennues: from whence he derived immeasurable benefite. While the three Brethren held on in their lavish expences, borrowing moneys when they wanted untill their supplies came from England, whereon (indeede) was theyr onely dependance: it fortuned, that (contrary to the opinion of all men) warre happened betweene the King of England, and one of his sonnes, which occasioned much trouble in the whole Countrey, by taking part on either side, some with the sonne, and other with the Father. In regard whereof, those Castles and places pawned to Alessandro, were sodainely seized from him, nothing then remaining, that turned him any profite. But living in hope day by day, that peace would be concluded betweene the Father and the Sonne, he never doubted, but all things then should be restored to him, both the principall and interest, and therfore he would not depart out of the Countrey.

The three Brethren at Florence, bounding within no limites their disordered spending; borrowed dayly more and more. And after some few yeares, the creditors seeing no effect of their hopes to come from them, all credit being lost with them, and no repayment of promised dues, they were imprisoned, their Landes and all they had, not suffising to pay the moitie of Debts, but their bodies remained in prison for the rest, theyr Wives and young children being sent thence, some to one village, some to another, so that nothing now was to be expected, but poverty and misery of life for ever.

As for honest Alessandro, who had awaited long time for peace in England, perceyving there was no likelyhoode of it; and considering also, that (beside his tarrying there in vaine to recover his dues) he was in danger of his life; without any further deferring, he set away for Italy. It came to passe, that as he yssued foorth of Bruges, hee saw a young Abbot also journeying thence, being cloathed in white, accompanied with divers Monkes, and a great traine before, conducting the needfull Carriage. Two auncient Knights, kinsmen to the King, followed after; with whom Alessandro acquainted himselfe, as having formerly known them, and was kindely accepted into their company. Alessandro riding along with them, courteously requested to know, what those Monks were that rode before, and such a traine attending on them? Whereto one of the Knights thus answered.

He that rideth before, is a yong Gentleman, and our Kinsman, who is newly elected Abbot of one of the best Abbeys in England, and because he is more yong in yeeres, then the decrees for such a dignity do allow, we travaile with him to Rome, to entreat our Holy Father, that his youth may be dispensed withall, and he confirmed in the said dignitie; but hee is not to speake a word to any person. On rode this new Abbot, sometimes before his Traine, and other whiles after, as we see great Lords use to do, when they ride upon the High-wayes.

It chanced on a day, that Alessandro rode somewhat neere to the Abbot, who stedfastly beholding him, perceived that he was a very comely young man, so affable, lovely, and gracious, that even in this first encounter, he had never seene any man before that better pleased him. Calling him a little closer, he began to conferre familiarly with him, demanding what he was, whence he came, and whether he travelled. Alessandro imparted freely to him all his affaires, in every thing satisfying his demands, and offering (although his power was small) to doe him all the service he could.

When the Abbot had heard his gentle answeres, so wisely and discreetly delivered, considering also (more particularly) his commendable carriage, hee tooke him to be (at the least) a well-borne Gentleman, and far differing from his owne logger headed traine. Wherefore, taking compassion on his great misfortunes, he comforted him very kindly, wishing him to live alwayes in good hope. For, if he were vertuous and honest, he should surely attaine to the seate from whence Fortune had throwne him, or rather much higher. Intreating him also, that seeing he journied towards Tuscany, as he himselfe did the like, to continue stil (if he pleased) in his company. Alessandro most humbly thanked him for such gracious comfort; protesting, that he would be alwaies readie to do whatsoever he commanded.

The Abbot riding on, with newer crotchets in his braine then he had before the sight of Alessandro, it fortuned, that after divers dayes of travaile, they came to a small Country Village, which affoorded little store of Lodging, and yet the Abbot would needes lye there. Alessandro, being well acquainted with the Hoste of the house, willed him to provide for the Abbot and his people, and then to lodge him where hee thought it meetest. Now before the Abbots comming thither, the Harbenger that marshalled all such matters, had provided for his Traine in the Village, some in one place, and others elsewhere, in the best maner that the Towne could yeelde. But when the Abbot had supt, a great part of the night being spent, and every one else at his rest; Alessandro demaunded of the Hoste, what provision he had made for him, and how hee should be lodged that night?

In good sadnesse Sir (quoth the Host) you see that my house is full of Guests, so that I and my people, must gladly sleepe on the tables and benches: Neverthelesse, next adjoyning to my Lord Abbots Chamber, there are certaine Corn-lofts, whether I can closely bring you, and making shift there with a slender Pallet-bed, it may serve for one night, insted of a better. But mine Host (quoth Alessandro) how can I passe thorow my Lords Chamber, which is so little, as it would not allow Lodging for any of his Monkes? If I had remembred so much (said the Host) before the Curtaines were drawne, I could have lodged his Monkes in the Corne-lofts, and then both you and I might have slept where now they doe. But feare you not, my Lords Curtaines are close drawne, hee sleepeth (no doubt) soundly, and I can conveigh you thither quietly enough, without the least disturbance to him, and a Pallet-bed shall be fitted there for you. Alessandro perceiving that all this might be easily done, and no disease offered to the Abbot, accepted it willingly, and went thither without any noyse at all.

My Lord Abbot, whose thoughts were so busied about amorous desires, that no sleepe at all could enter his eyes, heard all this talke between the Host and Alessandro, and also where hee was appointed to Lodge, he saide thus within himselfe. Seeing Fortune hath fitted me with a propitious time, to compasse the happinesse of my hearts desire; I know no reason why I should refuse it. Perhaps, I shall never have the like offer againe, or ever be enabled with such an opportunitie. So, beeing fully determined to prosecute his intention, and perswading himself also, that the silence of the night had bestowed sleepe on all the rest; with a lowe and trembling voyce, he called Alessandro, advising him to come and lye downe by him, which (after some few faint excuses) he did, and putting off his cloaths, lay downe by the Abbot, being not a little proude of so gracious a favour.

The Abbot, laying his arme over the others body, began to imbrace and hugge him; even as amorous friends (provoked by earnest affection) use to doe. Whereat Alessandro verie much mervayling, and being an Italian himselfe, fearing least this folly in the Abbot, would convert to foule and dishonest action, shrunke modestly from him. Which the Abbot perceiving, and doubting least Alessandro would depart and leave him, pleasantly smiling, and with bashfull behaviour baring his stomack, he tooke Alessandroes hand, and laying it thereon, saide; Alessandro, let all bad thoughts of bestiall abuse be farre off from thee, and feele here, to resolve thee from all such feare. Alessandro feeling the Abbots brest, found there two pretty little mountaines, round, plumpe, and smooth, appearing as if they had beene of polished Ivory; whereby he perceived, that the Abbot was a woman: which, setting an edge on his youthful desires, made him fall to embracing, and immediately he offered to kisse her; but she somewhat rudely repulsing him, as halfe offended, saide.

Alessandro, forbeare such boldnesse, uppon thy lives perill, and before thou further presume to touch me, understand what I shall tell thee. I am (as thou perceivest) no man, but a woman; and departing a Virgin from my Fathers House, am travelling towards the Popes holinesse, to the end that he should bestow me in marriage. But the other day, when first I beheld thee, whether it proceeded from thy happinesse in fortune, or the fatall houre of my owne infelicity for ever, I know not; I conceyved such an effectuall kinde of liking towardes thee, as never did Woman love a man more truely then I doe thee, having sworn within my soule to make thee my Husband before any other; and if thou wilt not accept me as thy wife, set a locke upon thy lippes concerning what thou hast heard, and depart hence to thine owne bed againe.

No doubt, but that these were strange newes to Alessandro, and seemed meerely as a miracle to him. What shee was, he knew not, but in regard of her traine and company, hee reputed her to be both noble and rich, as also she was wonderfull faire and beautifull. His owne fortunes stood out of future expectation by his kinsmens overthrow, and his great losses in England; wherefore, upon an opportunity so fairely offered, he held it no wisedome to returne refusall, but accepted her gracious motion, and referred all to her disposing. Shee arising out of her bed, called him to a little Table standing by, where hung a faire Crucifixe upon the wall; before which, and calling him to witnesse, that suffered such bitter and cruell torments on his Crosse, putting a Ring upon his finger, there she faithfully espoused him, refusing all the world, to be onely his: which being on either side confirmed solemnly, by an holy Vow, and chaste kisses; shee commanded him backe to his Chamber, and she returned to her bed againe, sufficiently satisfied with her Loves acceptation, and so they journied on till they came to Rome.

When they had rested themselves there for some few dayes, the supposed Abbot, with the two Knights, and none else in company but Alessandro, went before the Pope, and having done him such reverence as beseemed, the Abbot began to speake in this manner.

Holy Father (as you know much better then any other) everie one that desireth to live well and vertuously, ought to shunne (so farre as in them lyeth) all occasions that may induce to the contrarie. To the end therefore, that I (who desire nothing more) then to live within the compasse of a vertuous conversation, may perfect my hopes in this behalfe: I have fled from my Fathers Court, and am come hither in this habite as you see, to crave therein your holy and fatherly furtherance. I am daughter to the King of England, and have sufficiently furnished my selfe with some of his Treasures, that your Holinesse may bestow me in marriage; because mine unkind Father, never regarding my youth and beauty (inferior to few in my native country) would marry me to the King of North-Wales, an aged, impotent, and sickely man. Yet let me tell your sanctity, that his age and weakenesse hath not so much occasioned my flight, as feare of mine owne youth and frailety; when being married to him, instead of loyall and unstained life, lewd and dishonest desires might make me to wander, by breaking the divine Lawes of wedlocke, and abusing the royall blood of my Father.

As I travailed hither with this vertuous intention, our Lord, who onely knoweth perfectly, what is best fitting for all his creatures; presented mine eyes (no doubt in his meere mercy and goodnesse) with a man meete to be my husband, which (pointing to Alessandro) is this young Gentleman standing by me, whose honest, vertuous, and civill demeanour, deserveth a Lady of farre greater worth, although (perhaps) Nobility in blood be denied him, and may make him seeme not so excellent, as one derived from Royall discent. Holy and religious vowes have past betweene us both, and the Ring on his finger, is the firme pledge of my faith and constancie, never to accept any other man in marriage, but him onely, although my Father, or any else doe dislike it. Wherefore (holy Father) the principall cause of my comming hither, being already effectually concluded on, I desire to compleat the rest of my Pilgrimage, by visiting the sanctified places in this City, whereof there are great plenty: And also, that sacred marriage, being contracted in the presence of God onely, betweene Alessandro and my selfe, may by you be publikely confirmed, and in an open congregation. For, seeing God hath so appointed it, and our soules have so solemnely vowed it, that no disaster whatsoever can alter it: you being Gods Vicar here on earth, I hope will not gainesay, but confirme it with your fatherly benediction, that wee may live in Gods feare, and dye in his favour.

Perswade your selves (faire Ladies) that Alessandro was in no meane admiration, when hee heard, that his wife was daughter to the King of England, unspeakable joy (questionlesse) wholly overcame him: but the two Knights were not a little troubled and offended, at such a straunge and unexpected accident, yea, so violent were their passions, that had they beene any where else, then in the Popes presence, Alessandro had felt their furie, and (perhaps) the Princesse her selfe too. On the other side, the Pope was much amazed at the habite she went disguised in, and likewise at the election of her husband; but, perceiving there was no resistance to be made against it, hee yeelded the more willingly to satisfie her desire. And therefore, having first comforted the two Knights, and made peace betweene them, the Princesse, and Alessandro, he gave order for the rest that was to be done.

When the appointed day for the solemnity was come, hee caused the Princesse (cloathed in most rich and royall garments) to appeare before all the Cardinals, and many other great persons then in presence, who were come to this worthy Feast, which hee had caused purposely to bee prepared, where she seemed so faire and goodly a Lady, that every eye was highly delighted to behold her, commending her with no meane admiration. In like manner was Alessandro greatly honoured by the two Knights, being most sumptuous in appearance, and not like a man that had lent money to usury, but rather of very royall quality; the Pope himselfe celebrating the marriage betweene them, which being finished, with the most magnificent pompe that could be devised, hee gave them his benediction, and licenced their departure thence.

Alessandro, his Princesse and her traine thus leaving Rome, they would needes visite Florence, where the newes of this accident was (long before) noysed, and they received by the Citizens in royall manner. There did shee deliver the three brethren out of prison, having first payed all their debts, and reseated them againe (with their wives) in their former inheritances and possessions. Afterward, departing from Florence, and Agolanto, one of the Uncles travailing with them to Paris; they were there also most honourably entertained by the King of France. From whence the two Knights went before for England, and prevailed so successefully with the King; that hee received his daughter into grace and favour, as also his Sonne in law her husband, to whom hee gave the order of Knighthoode, and (for his greater dignitie) created him Earle of Cornewall.

And such was the noble spirit of Alessandro, that he pacified the troubles betweene the King and his sonne, whereon ensued great comfort to the Kingdome, winning the love and favour of all the people; and Agolanto (by the meanes of Alessandro) recovered all that was due to him and his brethren in England, returning richly home to Florence, Count Alessandro (his kinsman) having first dub'd him Knight. Long time he lived in peace and tranquility, with the faire Princesse his wife, proving to be so absolute in wisedome, and so famous a Souldier; that (as some report) by assistance of his Father in law, he conquered the Realme of Ireland, and was crowned King thereof.

THE FOURTH NOVELL

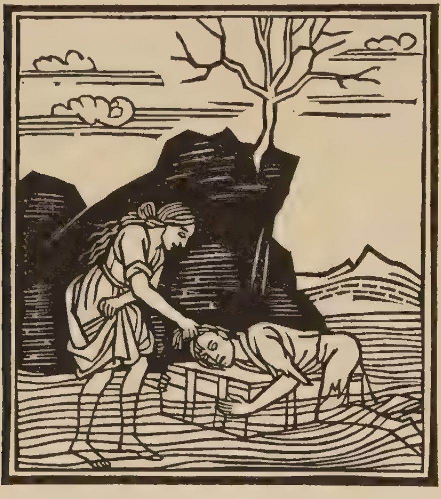
WHEREBY MAY BE DISCERNED, INTO HOW MANY DANGERS A MAN MAY FALL, THROUGH A COVETOUS DESIRE TO ENRICH HIMSELFE.

LANDOLPHO *Ruffolo, falling into poverty, became a Pirate on the Seas, and being taken by the Genewayes, hardly escaped drowning: Which yet (neverthelesse) he did, upon a little Chest or Coffer, full of very rich Jewels, being carried thereon to Corfu, where he was well entertained by a good woman; And afterward, returned richly home to his owne house.*

MADAM Lauretta, sitting next to Madam Pampinea, and seeing how triumphantly she had finished her discourse; without attending any thing else, spake thus. Gracious Ladies, we shall never behold (in mine opinion) a greater act of Fortune, then to see a man so suddainly exalted, even from the lowest depth of poverty, to a Royall estate of dignity; as the discourse of Madam Pampinea hath made good, by the happy advancement of Alessandro. And because it appeareth necessary, that whosoever discourseth on the subject proposed, should no way vary from the very same termes; I shall not shame to tell a tale, which, though it containe far greater mishapes then the former, may sort to as happy an issue, albeit not so noble and magnificent. In which respect, it may (perhaps) merit the lesse attention; but howsoever that fault shall be found in you, I meane to discharge mine owne duty.

Opinion hath made it famous for long time, that the Seacoast of Rhegium to Gaieta, is the onely delactable part of all Italy, wherein, somewhat neere to Salerno, is a shore looking upon the Sea, which the inhabitants there dwelling, doe call the coast of Malfy, full of small Townes, Gardens, Springs, and wealthy men, trading in as many kindes of Merchandizes, as any other people that I know. Among which Townes, there is one, named Ravello, wherein (as yet to this day there are rich people) there was (not long since) a very wealthy man, named Landolpho Ruffolo, who being not contented with his riches, but coveting to multiply them double and trebble, fell in danger, to loose both himselfe and wealth together.

This man (as other Merchants are wont to doe) after hee had considered on his affaires, bought him a very goodly Ship, lading it with divers sorts of Merchandizes, all belonging to himselfe onely, and making his voyage to the Isle of Cyprus. Where he found, over and beside the Merchandizes he had brought thither, many Ships more there arrived, and all laden with the same commodities, in regard whereof, it was needefull for him, not onely to make a good Mart of his goods; but also was further constrained (if hee meant to vent his commodities) to sell them away (almost) for nothing, endangering his utter destruction and overthrow. Whereupon, grieving exceedingly at so great a losse, not knowing what to doe, and seeing, that from very aboundant wealth, hee was likely to fall into as low poverty: he resolved to die, or to recompence his losses upon others, because he would not returne home poore, having departed thence so rich.



Meeting with a Merchant, that bought his great Ship of him; with the money made thereof, and also his other Merchandizes, hee purchased another, being a lighter vessell, apt and proper for the use of a Pirate, arming and furnishing it in ample manner, for roving and robbing upon the Seas. Thus hee began to make other mens goods his owne, especially from the Turkes he tooke much wealth, Fortune being alwayes therein so favourable to him, that hee could never compasse the like by trading. So that, within the space of one yeare, hee had robd and taken so many Gallies from the Turke; that he found himselfe well recovered, not onely of all his losses by Merchandize, but likewise his wealth was wholly redoubled. Finding his losses to be very liberally requited, and having now sufficient, it were folly to hazard a second fall; wherefore, conferring with his owne thoughts, and finding that he had enough, and needed not to covet after more: he fully concluded, now to returne home to his owne house againe, and live upon his goods thus gotten.

Continuing still in feare of the losses he had sustained by traffique, and minding never more to imploy his money that way, but to keep this light vessell, which had holpen him to all his wealth: he commanded his men to put forth their Oares, and shape their course for his owne dwelling. Being aloft in the higher Seas, darke night over-taking them, and a mighty winde suddainly comming upon them: it not onely was contrary to their course, but held on with such impetuous violence; that the small vessell, being unable to endure it, made to land-ward speedily, and in expectation of a more friendly wind, entred a little port of the Sea, directing up into a small Island, and there safely sheltred it selfe. Into the same port which Landolpho had thus taken for his refuge, entred (soone after) two great Carrackes of Genewayes, lately come from Constantinople. When the men in them had espied the small Barke, and lockt up her passage from getting forth; understanding the Owners name, and that report had famed him to be very rich, they determined (as men evermore addicted naturally, to covet after money and spoile) to make it their owne as a prize at Sea.

Landing some store of their men, well armed with Crossebowes and other weapons, they tooke possession of such a place, where none durst issue forth of the small Barke, but endangered his life with their Darts and Arrowes. Entering aboord the Barke, and making it their owne by full possession, all the men they threw over-boord, without sparing any but Landolpho himselfe, whom they mounted into one of the Carrackes, leaving him nothing but a poore shirt of Maile on his backe, and having rifled the Barke of all her riches, sunke it into the bottome of the sea. The day following, the rough windes being calmed, the Carrackes set saile againe, having a prosperous passage all the day long; but upon the entrance of darke night, the windes blew more tempestuously then before, and sweld the Sea in such rude stormes, that the two Carracks were sundered each from other, and by violence of the tempest it came to passe, that the Carracke wherein lay poore miserable Landolpho (beneath the Isle of Cephalonia) ran against a rocke, and even as a glasse against a wall, so split the Carracke in peeces, the goods and merchandize floating on the Sea, Chests, Coffers, Beds, and such like other things, as often hapneth in such lamentable accidents.

Now, notwithstanding the nights obscurity, and impetuous violence of the billowes; such as could swimme, made shift to save their lives by swimming. Others caught hold on such things, as by Fortunes favour, floated neerest to them, among whom, distressed Landolpho, desirous to save his life, if possibly it might be, espied a Chest or Coffer before him, ordained (no doubt) to be the meanes of his safety from drowning. Now although the day before, he had wished for death infinite times, rather then to returne home in such wretched poverty; yet, seeing how other men strove for safety of their lives by any helpe, were it never so little, hee tooke advantage of this favour offred him, and the rather in a necessitie so urgent. Keeping fast upon the Coffer so well as he could, and being driven by the winds and waves, one while this way, and anon quite contrary, he made shift for himselfe till day appeared; when looking every way about him, seeing nothing but clouds, the seas and the Coffer, which one while shrunke from under him, and another while supported him, according as the windes and billowes carried it: all that day and night thus he floated up and downe, drinking more then willingly hee would, but almost hunger-starved thorow want of foode. The next morning, either by the appointment of heaven or power of the Windes, Landolpho who was (well-neere) become a Spundge, holding his armes strongly about the Chest, as we have seene some doe, who (dreading drowning) take hold on any the very smallest helpe; drew neere unto the shore of the Iland Corfu, where (by good fortune) a poore woman was scowring dishes with the salt water and sand, to make them (housewife like) neate and cleane.

When shee saw the Chest drawing neere her, and not discerning the shape of any man, shee grew fearefull, and retyring from it, cried out aloude. He had no power of speaking to her, neither did his sight doe him the smallest service; but even as the waves and windes pleased, the Chest was driven still neerer to the Land, and then the woman perceyved that it had the forme of a Cofer, and looking more advisedly, beheld two armes extended over it, and afterward, she espied the face of a man, not being able to judge, whether he were alive, or no. Moved by charitable and womanly compassion, shee stept in among the billowes, and getting fast holde on the hayre of his head, drew both the Chest and him to the Land, and calling forth her Daughters to helpe her, with much adoe she unfolded his armes from the Chest, setting it up on her Daughters head, and then betweene them, Landolpho was led into the Towne, and there conveyed into a warme Stove, where quickly he recovered by her pains, his strength benummed with extreame cold.

Good wines and comfortable broathes shee cherished him withall, that his sences being indifferently restored, hee knew the place where hee was; but not in what manner he was brought thither, till the good woman shewed him the Cofer that had kept him floating upon the waves, and (next under God) had saved his life. The Chest seemed of such slender weight, that nothing of any value could be expected in it, either to recompence the womans great paines and kindnesse bestowne on him, or any matter of his owne benefit. Neverthelesse, the woman being absent, he opened the Chest, and found innumerable precious stones therein, some costly and curiously set in Gold, and others not fixed in any mettall. Having knowledge of their great worth and value (being a Merchant, and skil'd in such matters) he became much comforted, praysing God for this good successe, and such an admirable meanes of deliverance from danger.

Then considering with himselfe, that (in a short time) hee had beene twice well buffeted and beaten by Fortune, and fearing, least a third mishap might follow in like manner, hee consulted with his thoughts, how he might safest order the businesse, and bring so rich a booty (without perill) to his owne home. Wherefore, wrapping up the Jewels in very unsightly coloures, that no suspition at all should be conceived of them, hee saide to the good woman, that the Chest would not doe him any further service; but if shee pleased to lende him a small sacke or bagge, shee might keepe the Cofer, for in her house it would divers way stead her. The woman gladly did as he desired, and Landolpho returning her infinite thankes, for the loving kindnesse shee had affoorded him, throwing the sacke on his necke, passed by a Barke to Brundusiam, and from thence to Tranium, where Merchants in the City bestowed good garments on him, he acquainting them with his disasterous fortunes, but not a word concerning his last good successe.

Being come home in safety to Ravello, he fell on his knees, and thanked God for all his mercies towards him. Then opening the sacke, and viewing the Jewels at more leysure then formerly he had done, he found them to be of so great estimation, that selling them but at ordinary and reasonable rates, he was three times richer, then when hee departed first from his house. And having vented them all, he sent a great summe of money to the good woman at Corfu, that had rescued him out of the Sea, and saved his life in a danger so dreadfull. The like he did to Tranium, to the Merchants that had newly cloathed him; living richly upon the remainder, and never adventuring more to the Sea, but ended his dayes in wealth and honour.

THE FIFT NOVELL

COMPREHENDING, HOW NEEDFULL A THING IT IS, FOR A MAN THAT TRAVELLETH IN AFFAIRES OF THE WORLD, TO BE PROVIDENT AND WELL ADVISED, AND CAREFULLY TO KEEPE HIMSELFE FROM THE CRAFTY AND DECEITFULL ALLUREMENTS OF STRUMPETS.

Andrea de Piero, travelling from Perouse to Naples to buy Horses, was (in the space of one night) surprised by three admirable accidents, out of all which he fortunately escaped, and with a rich Ring, returned home to his owne house.

THE precious Stones and Jewels found by Landolpho, maketh mee to remember (said Madam Fiammetta, who was next to deliver her discourse) a Tale, containing no lesse perils, then that reported by Madam Lauretta: but somewhat different from it, because the one happened in sundry yeeres, and this other had no longer time, then the compasse of one poore night, as instantly I will relate unto you.

As I have heard reported by many, there sometime lived in Perouse or Perugia, a young man, named Andrea de Piero, whose profession was to trade about Horses, in the nature of a Horse-courser, or Horse-master, who hearing of a good Faire or Market (for his purpose) at Naples, did put five hundred Crownes of gold in his purse, and journeyed thither in the company of other Horse-coursers, arriving there on a Sunday in the evening. According to instructions given him by his Host, he went the next day into the Horse-market, where he saw very many Horses that he liked, cheapening their prices as he went up and downe, but could fall to no agreement; yet to manifest that he came purposely to buy, and not as a cheapener onely, oftentimes (like a shallow-brainde trader in the world) he shewed his purse of gold before all passengers, never respecting who, or what they were that observed his follie.

It came to passe, that a young Sicillian wench (very beautifull, but at commaund of whosoever would, and for small hire) passing then by, and (without his percieving) seeing such store of gold in his purse; presently she said to her selfe: why should not all those crownes be mine, when the foole that owes them, can keepe them no closer? And so she went on. With this young wanton there was (at the same time) an olde woman (as commonly such stuffe is alwayes so attended) seeming to be a Sicillian also, who so soone as shee saw Andrea, knew him, and leaving her youthfull commodity, ranne to him, and embraced him very kindly. Which when the younger Lasse perceived, without proceeding any further, she stayed to see what would ensue thereon. Andrea conferring with the olde Bawde, and knowing her (but not for any such creature) declared himselfe very affable to her; she making him promise, that shee would come and drinke with him at his lodging. So breaking off further speeches for that time, shee returned to her young Cammerado; and Andrea went about buying his horses, still cheapning good store, but did not buy any all that morning.

The Punke that had taken notice of Andreas purse, upon the olde womans comming backe to her (having formerly studied, how shee might get all the gold, or the greater part thereof) cunningly questioned with her, what the man was, whence hee came, and the occasion of his businesse there? wherein she fully informed her particularly, and in as ample manner as himselfe could have done: That shee had long time dwelt in Sicily with his Father, and afterward at Perouse; recounting also, at what time she came thence, and the cause which now had drawne him to Naples. The witty young housewife, being thorowly instructed, concerning the Parents and kindred of Andrea, their names, quality, and all other circumstances thereto leading; began to frame the foundation of her purpose thereupon, setting her resolution downe constantly, that the purse and gold was (already) more than halfe her owne.

Being come home to her owne house, away shee sent the olde Pandresse about other businesse, which might hold her time long enough of employment, and hinder her returning to Andrea according to promise, purposing, not to trust her in this serious piece of service. Calling a young crafty Girle to her, whom she had well tutoured in the like ambassages, when evening drew on, she sent her to Andreas lodging, where (by good fortune) she found him sitting alone at the doore, and demanding of him, if he knew an honest Gentleman lodging there, whose name was Signior Andrea de Piero; he made her answere, that himselfe was the man. Then taking him aside, she said. Sir, there is a worthy Gentlewoman of this Citie, that would gladly speake with you, if you pleased to vouchsafe her so much favour.

Andrea, hearing such a kinde of salutation, and from a Gentlewoman, named of worth; began to grow proud in his owne imaginations, and to make no meane estimation of himselfe: As (undoubtedly) that he was an hansome proper man, and of such cariage and perfections, as had attracted the amorous eye of this Gentlewoman, and induced her to like and love him beyond all other, Naples not containing a man of better merit. Whereupon he answered the Mayde, that he was ready to attend her Mistresse, desiring to know, when it should be, and where the Gentlewoman would speake with him? So soone as you please Sir, replied the Damosell, for she tarrieth your comming in her owne house.

Instantly Andrea (without leaving any direction of his departure in his lodging, or when he intended to returne againe) said to the Girle: Goe before, and I will follow. This little Chamber-commodity, conducted him to her Mistresses dwelling, which was in a streete named Malpertuis, a title manifesting sufficiently the streetes honesty: but hee, having no such knowledge thereof, neither suspecting any harme at all, but that he went to a most honest house, and to a Gentlewoman of good respect; entred boldly: the Mayde going in before, and guiding him up a faire payre of stayres, which he having more then halfe ascended, the cunning young Queane gave a call to her Mistresse, saying; Signior Andrea is come already, whereupon, she appeared at the stayres-head, as if she had stayed there purposely to entertaine him. She was young, very beautifull, comely of person, and rich in adornements, which Andrea well observing, and seeing her descend two or three steps, with open armes to embrace him, catching fast hold about his neck; he stood as a man confounded with admiration, and she contained a cunning kinde of silence, even as if she were unable to utter one word, seeming hindered by extremity of joy at his presence, and to make him effectually admire her extraordinary kindnesse, having teares plenteously at commaund, intermixed with sighes and broken speeches, at last, thus she spake.

Signior Andrea, you are the most welcome friend to me in the world; sealing this salutation with infinite sweet kisses and embraces: whereat (in wonderfull amazement) he being strangely transported, replied; Madame, you honour me beyond all compasse of merit. Then, taking him by the hand, shee guided him thorough a goodly Hall, into her owne Chamber, which was delicately embalmed with Roses, Orenge flowers, and all other pleasing smelles, and a costly bed in the middest, curtained round about, verie artificiall Pictures beautifying the walles, with many other embellishments, such as those Countries are liberally stored withall. He being meerely a novice in these kinds of wanton carriages of the World, and free from any base or degenerate conceite; firmely perswaded himselfe, that (questionlesse) she was a Lady of no meane esteeme, and he more then happy, to be thus respected and honored by her. They both being seated on a curious Chest at the beds feete, teares cunningly trickling downe her Cheekes, and sighes intermedled with inward sobbings, breathed foorth in sad, but verie seemely manner, thus shee beganne.

I am sure Andrea, that you greatly marvell at me, in gracing you with this solemne and kinde entertainment, and why I should so melt my selfe in sighes and teares, at a man that hath no knowledge of mee, or perhaps, sildome or never heard any speeches of mee: but you shall instantly receive from mee matter to augment your greater marvaile, meeting heere with your owne Sister, beyond all hope or expectation in eyther of us both. But seeing that Heaven hath beene so gracious to me, to let mee see one of my Brethren before I dye (though gladly I would have seene them all) which is some addition of comfort to me, and that which (happily) thou hast never heard before, in plaine and truest manner, I will reveale unto thee.

Piero, my Father and thine, dwelt long time (as thou canst not choose but to have understood) in Palermo; where, through the bounty, and other gracious good parts remaining in him, he was much renowned, and to this day, is no doubt remembred, by many of his loving Friends and Well-willers. Among them that most intimately affected Piero, my mother (who was a Gentlewoman, and at that time a widow) did deerest of all other love him; so that forgetting the feare of her Father, Brethren, yea, and her owne honour, they became so privately acquainted, that I was begotten, and am heere now such as thou seest me. Afterward, occasions so befalling our Father, to abandon Palermo, and returne to Perouse, he left my mother and me his little daughter, never after (for ought that I could learne) once remembring either her or me: so that (if he had not beene my Father) I could have much condemned him, in regard of his ingratitude to my mother, and love which hee ought to have shewne me as his childe, being borne of no Chamber-maide, neyther of a Citty sinner; albeit I must needes say, that she was blame-worthy, without any further knowledge of him (moved onely thereto by most loyal affection) to commit both her selfe, and all the wealth shee had, into his hands: but things ill done, and so long time since, are more easily controulled, then amended.

Being left so young at Palermo, and growing (well neere) to the stature as now you see me; my Mother (being wealthy) gave me in marriage to one of the Gergentes Family, a Gentleman, and of great revennues, who in his love to me and my mother, went and dwelt at Palermo: where falling into the Guelphes Faction, and making one in the enterprize with Charles our King; it came to passe, that they were discovered to Fredericke King of Arragon, before their intent could be put in execution: Whereupon, we were enforced to flye from Sicily, even when my hope stoode fairely, to have beene the greatest Lady in all the Island. Packing up then such few things as wee could take with us, (few I may well call them, in regard of our wealthy possessions, both in Pallaces, Houses, and Lands, all which we were constrained to forgo:) we made our recourse to this Citty, where we found King Charles so benigne and gracious to us, that recompencing the greater part of our losses, he bestowed Lands and houses on us here, beside a continuall large pension to my husband your brother in Law, as heereafter himselfe shall better acquaint you withal. Thus came I hither, and thus remaine here, where I am able to welcome my brother Andrea, thankes more to Fortune, then any friendlinesse in him. With which words she embraced and kissed him many times, sighing and weeping as she did before.

Andrea hearing this Fable so artificially delivered, composed from point to point with such likely protestations, without faltring or failing in any one words utterance; and remembring perfectly for truth, that his Father had formerly dwelt at Palermo; knowing also (by some sensible feeling in himselfe) the custome of young people, who are easily conquered by affection in their youthfull heate, seeing beside the tears, trembling speeches, and earnest embracings of this cunning commodity; he tooke all to be true by her thus spoken, and upon her silence, thus replyed. Lady, let it not seeme strange to you, that your words have raysed marvell in me, because (indeed) I had no knowledge of you, even no more then as if I had never seene you: never also having heard my father speak either of you or your mother (for some considerations best known unto himselfe:) or if at any time he used such language, either my youth then, or defective memory since, hath utterly lost it. But truely, it is no little joy and comfort to me, to finde a sister here, where I had no such hope or expectation, and where also myselfe am a meere stranger. For to speake my minde freely of you, and the perfections gracefully appearing in you I know not any man of how great repute or qualitie soever, but you may well beseeme his acceptance, much rather then mine, that am but a mean Merchant. But faire Sister, I desire to be resolved in one thing, to wit; by what means you had understanding of my being in this City? whereto readily she returned him this answer.

Brother, a poore Woman of this City, whom I employ sometimes in houshold occasions, came to mee this morning, and (having seene you) tolde me, that shee dwelt a long while with our Father, both at Palermo and Perouse. And because I held it much better beseeming my condition, to have you visite me in mine owne dwelling, then I to come see you at a common Inne, I made the bolder to send for you hither. After which words, in very orderly manner, she enquired of his chiefest kindred and friends, calling them readily by their proper names, according to her former instructions. Whereto Andrea still made her answere, confirming thereby his beliefe of her the more strongly, and crediting whatsoever she saide, farre better then before.

Their conference having long time continued, and the heate of the day being somewhat extraordinary, she called for Greeke wine, and banquetting stuffe, drinking to Andrea; and he pledging her very contentedly. After which, he would have returned to his lodging, because it drew neere supper time; which by no meanes shee would permit, but seeming more then halfe displeased, shee saide. Now I plainely perceive brother, how little account you make of me, considering, you are with your owne Sister, who (you say) you never saw before, and in her owne House, whether you should alwayes resort when you come to this City; and would you now refuse her, to goe and sup at a common Inne? Beleeve me Brother, you shall sup with me, for although my Husband is now from home, to my no little discontentment: yet you shall find Brother, that his wife, can bid you welcome, and make you good cheere beside.

Now was Andrea so confounded with this extremity of courtesie, that he knew not what to say, but onely thus replied. I love you as a Sister ought to be loved, and accept of your exceeding kindnesse: but if I returne not to my lodging, I shall wrong mine Host and his guests too much, because they will not sup untill I come. For that (quoth shee) we have a present remedy, one of my servants shall goe and give warning, whereby they shall not tarry your comming. Albeit, you might doe me a great kindnesse, to send for your friends to sup with us here, where I assure ye, they shall finde that your Sister (for your sake) will bid them welcome, and after supper, you may all walke together to your Inne. Andrea answered, that he had no such friends there, as should be so burthenous to her: but seeing she urged him so farre, he would stay to sup with her, and referred himselfe solely to her disposition.

Ceremonious shew was made, of sending a servant to the Inne, for not expecting Andreas presence at Supper, though no such matter was performed; but, after divers other discoursings, the table being covered, and variety of costly viands placed thereon, downe they sate to feeding, with plenty of curious Wines liberally walking about, so that it was darke night before they arose from the table. Andrea then offring to take his leave, she would (by no meanes) suffer it, but tolde him, that Naples was a Citie of such strict Lawes and Ordinances, as admitted no night-walkers, although they were Natives, much lesse strangers, but punnished them with great severity. And therefore, as she had formerly sent word to his Inne, that they should not expect his comming to supper, the like had she done concerning his bed, intending to give her Brother Andrea one nights lodging, which as easily she could affoord him, as shee had done a Supper. All which this new-caught Woodcocke verily crediting, and that he was in company of his owne Sister Fiordeliza (for so did she cunningly stile her selfe, and in which beleefe he was meerely deluded) he accepted the more gladly her gentle offer, and concluded to stay there all that night.

After supper, their conference lasted very long, purposely dilated out in length, that a great part of the night might therein be wasted: when, leaving Andrea to his Chamber, and a Lad to attend, that he should lacke nothing; she with her women went to their lodgings, and thus our Brother and supposed Sister were parted. The season then being somewhat hot and soultry, Andrea put off his hose and doublet, and being in his shirt alone, layed them underneath the beds boulster, as seeming carefull of his money. But finding a provocation to the house of Office, he demanded of the Lad, where hee might find it; who shewed him a little doore in a corner of the Chamber, appointing him to enter there. Safely enough he went in, but chanced to tread upon a board, which was fastened at neither ende to the joynts whereon it lay, being a pit-fall made of purpose, to entrap any such coxcombe, as would be trained to so base a place of lodging, so that both he and the board fell downe together into the draught; yet such being his good fortune, to receive no harme in the fall (although it was of extraordinary height) onely the filth of the place, (it being over full) had fowly myred him.

Now for your better understanding the quality of the place, and what ensued thereupon, it is not unnecessary to describe it, according to a common use observed in those parts. There was a narrow passage or entrie, as often we see reserved betweene two houses, for eithers benefit to such a needfull place; and boards loosely lay upon the joynts, which such as were acquainted withall, could easily avoide any perille in passing to or from the stoole. But our so newly created Brother, not dreaming to find a Queane to his Sister, receiving so foule a fall into the vault, and knowing not how to helpe himselfe, being sorrowfull beyond measure; cryed out to the boy for light and aide, who intended not to give him any. For the crafty wag, (a meete attendant for so honest a Mistresse) no sooner heard him to be fallen, but presently he ran to enforme her thereof, and shee as speedily returned to the Chamber, where finding his cloathes under the beds head, shee needed no instruction for search of his pockets. But having found the gold, which Andrea indiscreetely carried alwayes about him, as thinking it could no where else be so safe: This was all shee aymed at, and for which shee had ensnared him, faigning her selfe to be of Palermo, and Daughter to Piero of Perouse, so that not regarding him any longer, but making fast the house of Office doore, there she left him in that miserable taking.

Poore Andrea perceiving, that his calles could get no answere from the Lad; cryed out louder, but all to no purpose: when seeing into his owne simplicity, and understanding his error, though somewhat too late, hee made such meanes constrainedly, that he got over a wall, which severed that foule sinke from the Worlds eye; and being in the open streete, went to the doore of the House, which then he knew too well to his cost, making loud exclaimes with rapping and knocking, but all as fruitelesse as before. Sorrowing exceedingly, and manifestly beholding his misfortune; Alas (quoth he) how soone have I lost a Sister, and five hundred Crownes besides? With many other words, loud calles, and beatings uppon the doore without intermission, the neighbours finding themselves disturbed, and unable to endure any such ceaselesse vexation, rose from their beddes, and called to him, desiring him to be gone, and let them rest. A Maide also of the same house, looking forth at the window, and seeming as newly raised from sleepe, called to him, saying; What noyse is that beneath? Why Virgin (answered Andrea) know you not me? I am Andrea de Piero, Brother to your Mistresse Fiordeliza. Thou art a drunken knave replyed the Maide, more full of drinke then wit: goe sleepe, goe sleepe, and come againe to morrow: for I know no Andrea de Piero, neither hath my Mistresse any such Brother. Get thee gone good man, and suffer us to sleepe I prythee. How now (quoth Andrea) doest thou not understand what I say? Thou knowest that I supt with thy Mistresse this night; but if our Sicilian kindred be so soone forgot, I prythee give mee my Cloathes which I left in my Chamber, and then verie gladly will I get mee gone. Hereat the Maide laughing out aloude, saide; Surely the man is mad, or walketh the streetes in a dreame: and so clasping fast the Window, away she went and left him.

Now could Andrea assure himselfe, that his Golde and cloathes were past recovery, which mooving him to the more impatience, his former intercessions became converted into furie, and what hee could not compasse by faire intreats, he intended to winne by outrage and violence: so that taking up a great stone in his hand, hee layed upon the doore verie powerfull strokes. The neighbors hearing this mollestation still, admitting them not the least respite of rest, reputed him for a troublesome fellow, and that he used those counterfet words, onely to disturbe the Mistresse of the house, and all that dwelled neere about her; looking againe out at their windowes, they altogether beganne to rate and reprove him, even like so many bawling Curres, barking at a strange dog passing through the street. This is shamefull villany (quoth one) and not to be suffered, that honest women should thus be molested in their houses, with foolish idle words, and at such an unseasonable time of the night. For Gods sake (good man) be gone, and let us sleepe; if thou have any thing to say to the Gentlewoman of the house, come to morrow in the day time, and no doubt but she will make thee sufficient answer.

Andrea, being some what pacified with these speeches, a shagge-hayr'd swash-buckler, a grim visagde Ruffian (as sildome bawdy houses are without such swaggering Champions) not seene or heard by Andrea, all the while of his being in the house; rapping out two or three terrible Oathes, opening a Casement, and with a stearne dreadfull voyce, demanded, who durst keepe that noyse beneath? Andrea fearefully looking up, and (by a little glimmering of the Moone) seeing such a rough fellow, with a blacke beard, strowting like the quilles of a Porcupine, and patches on his face, for hurts received in no honest quarrels, yawning also and stretching, as angry to have his sleepe disturbed: trembling and quaking, answered; I am the Gentlewomans brother of the house. The Ruffian interrupting him, and speaking more fiercely then before; sealing his words with horrible Oathes, said. Sirra, Rascall, I know not of whence, or what thou art; but if I come downe to thee, I will so bumbast thy prating Coxecombe, as thou wast never so beaten in all thy life, like a drunken slave and beast as thou art, that all this night wilt not let us sleepe. And so hee clapt to the window againe.

The Neighbours well acquainted with this Ruffians rude conditions, speaking in gentle manner to Andrea, said. Shift for thy selfe (good man) in time, and tarrie not for his comming downe to thee, except thou art weary of thy life: Be gone therefore, and say thou hast a friendly warning. These words dismaying Andrea, but much more the sterne oathes and ougly sight of the Ruffian, incited also by the Neighbours counsell, whom he imagined to advise him in charitable manner: it caused him to depart thence, taking the way home-ward to his Inne, in no mean affliction and torment of minde, for the monstrous abuse offered him, and losse of his money. Well he remembred the passages, whereby the day before the young Gyrle had guided him, but the loathsome smell about him, was so extreamely offensive to himselfe, that desiring to wash him at the Sea side, he strayed too farre wide on the contrary hand, wandring up the street called Ruga Gatellana.

Proceeding on still, even to the highest part of the Citie, hee espyed a Lanthorne and light, as also a man carrying it, and another man with him in company, both of them comming towards him. Now, because he suspected them two of the watch, or some persons that would apprehend him, he stept aside to shunne them, and entred into an olde house hard by at hand. The other mens intention was to the very same place; and going in, without any knowledge of Andreaes beeing there, one of them layde downe divers instruments of Iron which he had brought thither on his backe, and had much talke with his fellow concerning those Engines. At last one of them saide; I smell the most abhominable stinke that ever I felt in all my life. So, lifting up the Lanthorn, he espied poore pittifull Andrea, closely couched behinde the wall. Which sight somewhat affrighting him, he yet boldly demaunded, what and who he was? Whereto Andrea answered nothing, but lay still and held his peace. Neerer they drew towards him with their light, demanding how hee came thither, and in that filthy manner.

Constraint having now no other evasion, but that (of necessitie) all must out: hee related to them the whole adventure, in the same sort as it had befalne him. They greatly pittying his misfortune, one of them said to the other: Questionlesse, this villanie was done in the house of Scarabone Buttafucco. And then turning to Andrea, proceeded thus. In good faith poore man, albeit thou hast lost thy money, yet art thou much beholding to Fortune, for falling (though in a foule place) yet in a successfull manner, and entring no more backe into the house. For beleeve mee friend, if thou haddest not falne, but quietly gone to sleepe in the house, that sleepe had beene thy last in this world, and with thy money, thou hadst lost thy life likewise. But teares and lamentations are now helpelesse, because as easily mayest thou plucke the Starres from the Firmament, as get againe the least doyt of thy losse. And for that shag-haird Slave in the house, he will be thy deathsman, if hee but understand that thou makest any enquirie after thy money. When he had thus admonished him, he began also in this manner to comfort him. Honest fellow, we cannot but pitty thy present condition: wherfore if thou wilt frendly associate us, in a businesse which we are instantly going to effect, thy losse hath not bene so great, but on our words we will warrant thee, that thine immediate gaine shall farre exceede it. What will not a man (in desperate extremity) both well like and allow of, especially when it carryeth apparance of present comfort. So fared it with Andrea, hee perswaded himselfe, worse then had already happened, could not befall him; and therefore he would gladly adventure with them.

The selfe same day preceding this disastrous night to Andrea, in the cheefe Church of the Cittie, had beene buried the Archbishop of Naples named Signior Phillippo Minutulo, in his richest pontificall Robes and Ornaments, and a Ruby on his finger valued to be worth five hundred duckets of gold: this dead body they purposed to rob and rifle, acquainting Andrea with their whole intent, whose necessitie (coupled with a covetous desire) made him more forward then well advised, to joyne with them in this sacriligious enterprize. On they went towards the great Church, Andreaes unsavourie perfume much displeasing them, whereupon the one said to his fellow: Can we devise no ease for this foule and noysome inconveniences? the very smell of him will be a meanes to betray us. There is a Well-pit hard by, answered the other, with a pulley and bucket descending downe into it, and there we may wash him from this filthinesse. To the Well-pit they came, where they found the rope and pulley hanging readie, but the bucket for safety was taken away; whereon they concluded, to fasten the rope about him, and so let him downe into the Well-pit, and when he had washed himselfe, hee should wagge the rope, and then they would draw him up againe, which accordingly they forthwith performed.

Now it came to passe, that while he was thus washing himselfe in the Well-pit, the Watch of the Citie walking the round, and finding it to bee a very hote and sweltring night, they grew dry and thirsty, and therefore went to the Well to drinke. The other two men, perceiving the Watch so neere upon them, left Andrea in the pit to shift for himselfe, running away to shelter themselves. Their flight was not discovered by the Watch, but they comming to the Well-pit, Andrea remained still in the bottome, and having cleansed himselfe so well as hee could, sate wagging the rope, expecting when hee should be haled up. This dumbe signe the Watch discerned not, but sitting downe by the Welles side, they layde downe their Billes and other weapons, tugging to draw up the rope, thinking the Bucket was fastened thereto, and full of water. Andrea being haled up to the Pits brim, left holding the rope any longer, catching fast hold with his hands for his better safety; and the Watch at the sight hereof being greatly affrighted, as thinking that they had dragd up a Spirit; not daring to speake one word, ran away with all the hast they could make.

Andrea hereat was not a little amazed, so that if he had not taken very good hold on the brim: he might have falne to the bottome, and doubtlesse there his life had perished. Being come forth of the Well, and treading on Billes and Halbards, which he well knew that his companions had not brought thither with them; his mervaile so much the more encreased, ignorance and feare still seizing him, with silent bemoaning his many misfortunes, away thence he wandred, but hee wist not whither. As he went on, he met his two fellowes, who purposely returned to drag him out of the Well, and seeing their intent already performed, desired to know who had done it: wherein Andrea could not resolve them, rehearsing what hee could, and what weapons hee found lying about the Well. Whereat they smiled, as knowing, that the Watch had haled him up, for feare of whom they left him, and so declared to him the reason of their returne.

Leaving off all further talke, because now it was about midnight, they went to the great Church, where finding their enterance to be easie: they approached neere the Tombe, which was very great, being tall of Marble, and the cover-stone weighty, yet with crowes of yron and other helps, they raised it so high, that a man might without perill passe into it. Now began they to question one another, which of the three should enter into the Tombe. Not I, said the first; so said the second: No nor I, answered Andrea. Which when the other two heard, they caught fast hold of him, saying. Wilt not thou goe into the Tombe? Be advised what thou sayest, for, if thou wilt not goe in: we will so beat thee with one of these yron crowes, that thou shalt never goe out of this Church alive.

Thus poore Andrea is still made a property, and Fortune (this fatall night) will have no other foole but he, as delighting in his hourly disasters. Feare of their fury makes him obedient, into the grave he goes, and being within, thus consults with himselfe. These cunning companions suppose me to be simple, and make me enter the Tombe, having an absolute intention to deceive me. For, when I have given them all the riches that I finde here, and am ready to come forth for mine equall portion: away will they runne for their owne safety, and leaving me heere, not onely shall I loose my right among them, but must remaine to what danger may follow after. Having thus meditated, he resolved to make sure of his owne share first, and remembring the rich Ring, whereof they had tolde him: forthwith hee tooke it from the Archbishops finger, finding it indifferently fitte for his owne. Afterward, hee tooke the Crosse, Miter, rich garments, Gloves and all, leaving him nothing but his shirt, giving them all these severall parcels, protesting that there was nothing else. Still they pressed upon him, affirming that there was a Ring beside, urging him to search diligently for it; yet still he answered, that he could not finde it, and for their longer tarrying with him, seemed as if he serched very carefully, but all appeared to no purpose.

The other two fellowes, as cunning in craft as the third could be, still willed him to search, and watching their aptest opportunity: tooke away the proppes that supported the Tombe-stone, and running thence with their got booty, left poore Andrea mewed up in the grave. Which when he perceived, and saw this miserie to exceede all the rest, it is farre easier for you to guesse at his greefe, then I am any way able to expresse it. His head, shoulders, yea all his utmost strength he employeth, to remove that over-heavy hinderer of his libertie: but all his labour beeing spent in vaine, sorrow threw him in a swoond upon the Byshoppes dead body, where if both of them might at that instant have bin observed, the Arch-byshops dead bodie, and Andrea in greefe dying, very hardly had bene distinguished. But his senses regaining their former offices, among his silent complaints, consideration presented him with choyse of these two unavoydable extremities: Dye starving must he in the Tombe with putrifaction of the dead bodie; or if any man came to open the Grave, then must he be apprehended as a sacrilegious Theefe, and so be hanged, according to the Lawes in that case provided.

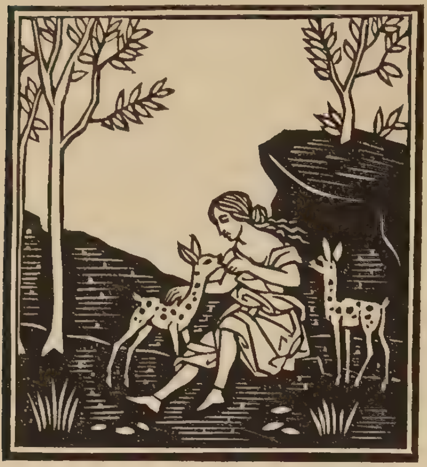
As hee continued in these strange afflictions of minde, sodainely hee heard a noise in the Church of divers men, who (as he imagined) came about the like businesse, as hee and his fellowes had undertaken before; wherein he was not a jot deceived, albeit his feare the more augmented. Having opened the Tombe, and supported the stone, they varied also among themselves for entrance, and an indiffrent while contended about it. At length, a Priest being one in the company, boldly said. Why how now you white-liver'd Rascals? What are you affraid of? Do you thinke he will eate you? Dead men cannot bite, and therefore I my selfe will go in. Having thus spoken, he prepared his entrance to the tomb in such order, that he thrust in his feete before, for his easier descending downe into it.

Andrea sitting upright in the Tombe, and desiring to make use of this happy opportunity, caught the Priest fast by one of his legges, making shew as if he meant to dragge him downe. Which when the Priest felt, he cryed out aloud, getting out with all the haste he could make, and all his companions, being well-neere frighted out of their wits, ranne away amaine, as if they had bene followed by a thousand divels. Andrea little dreaming on such fortunate successe, made meanes to get out of the grave, and afterward forth of the Church, at the very same place where he entred.

Now began day-light to appeare, when he (having the rich Ring on his finger) wandred on hee knew not whether: till comming to the Sea side, he found the way directing to his Inne, where al his company were with his Host, who had bene verie carefull for him.

Having related his manifold mischances, his Hoste friendly advised him with speede to get him out of Naples. As instantly he did, returning home to Perouse, having adventured his five hundred Crownes on a Ring, wherewith hee purposed to have bought Horses, according to the intent of his journey thither.

THE SIXT NOVELL



HEEREIN ALL MEN ARE ADMONISHED, NEVER TO DISTRUST THE POWERFULL HAND OF HEAVEN, WHEN FORTUNE SEEMETH TO BE MOST ADVERSE AGAINST THEM.

MADAME *Beritola Caracalla, was found in an Island with two Goates, having lost her two Sonnes, and thence travailed into Lunigiana: where one of her Sonnes became servant to the Lord thereof, and was found somewhat over-familiar with his Masters daughter, who therefore caused him to be imprisoned. Afterward, when the country of Sicely rebelled against King Charles, the aforesaid Sonne chanced to bee knowne by his Mother, and was married to his Masters daughter. And his Brother being found likewise, they both returned to great estate and credit.*

THE Ladies and Gentlemen also, having smiled sufficiently at the severall accidents which did befall the poore Traveller Andrea, reported at large by Madam Fiammetta, the Lady Æmillia seeing her tale to be fully concluded, began (by commandement of the Queene) to speak in this manner.

The diversitie of changes and alterations in Fortune as they are great, so must they needs be greevous; and as often as we take occasion to talke of them, so often do they awake and quicken our understandings, avouching, that it is no easie matter to depend upon her flatteries. And I am of opinion, that to heare them recounted, ought not any way to offend us, be it of men wretched, or fortunate; because, as they instruct the one with good advice, so they animate the other with comfort. And therefore, although great occasions have beene already related, yet I purpose to tell a Tale, no lesse true then lamentable; which albeit it sorted to a successefull ending, yet notwithstanding, such and so many were the bitter thwartings, as hardly can I beleeve, that ever any sorrow was more joyfully sweetned.

You must understand then (most gracious Ladies) that after the death of Fredericke the second Emperour, one named Manfred, was crowned King of Sicily, about whom, lived in great account and authority, a Neapolitane Gentleman, called Henriet Capece, who had to Wife a beautifull Gentlewoman, and a Neapolitane also, named Madam Beritola Caracalla. This Henriet held the government of the Kingdome of Sicily, and understanding that King Charles the first, had wonne the battle at Beneventum, and slaine King Manfred, the whole Kingdome revolting also to his devotion, and little trust to be reposed in the Sicillians, or he willing to subject himselfe to his Lordes enemie; provided for his secret flight from thence. But this being discovered to the Sicillians, he and many more, who had beene loyall servants to King Manfred, were suddenly taken and imprisoned by King Charles, and the sole possession of the Iland confirmed to him.

Madam Beritola not knowing (in so sudden and strange an alteration of State affaires) what was become of her Husband, fearing also greatly before, those inconveniences which afterward followed; being overcome with many passionate considerations, having left and forsaken all her goods, going aboord a small Barke with a Sonne of hers, aged about some eight yeeres, named Geoffrey, and growne great with child with another, she fled thence to Lapary, where she was brought to bed of another Sonne, whom she named (answerable both to his and her hard fortune,) The poore expelled.

Having provided her selfe of a Nurse, they altogether went aboard againe, setting sayle for Naples to visit her Parents; but it chanced quite contrary to her expectation, because by stormie windes and weather, the vessell being bound for Naples, was hurried to the Ile of Ponzo, where entring into a small Port of the Sea, they concluded to make their aboade, till a time more furtherous should favour their voyage.

As the rest, so did Madam Beritola goe on shore in the Iland, where having found a separate and solitary place, fit for her silent and sad meditations, secretly by her selfe, shee sorrowed for the absence of her husband. Resorting daily to this her sad exercise, and continuing there her complaints, unseene by any of the Marriners, or whosoever else: there arrived suddenly a Galley of Pyrates, who seazing on the small Barke, carried it and all the rest in it away with them. When Beritola had finished her wofull complaints, as daily shee was accustomed to doe, shee returned backe to her children againe; but finding no person there remayning, whereat she wondered not a little: immediately (suspecting what had happened indeede) she lent her lookes on the Sea, and saw the Galley, which as yet had not gone farre, drawing the smaller vessell after her. Hereby plainly she perceyved, that now she had lost her children, as formerly shee had done her husband; being left there poore, forsaken, and miserable, not knowing when, where, or how to finde any of them againe; and calling for her Husband and Children, shee fell downe in a swound uppon the shore.

Now was not any body neere, with coole water or any other remedy to helpe the recovery of her lost powers; wherefore her spirits might the more freely wander at their owne pleasure: but after they were returned backe againe, and had won their wonted offices in her body, drowned in teares, and wringing her hands, she did nothing but call for her children and husband, straying all about in hope to finde them, seeking in caves, dens, and every where else, that presented the verie least glimpse of comfort. But when she saw all her paines sort to no purpose, and darke night drawing swiftly on, hope and dismay raising infinite perturbations, made her yet to be somewhat respective of her selfe, and therefore departing from the sea-shore, she returned to the solitary place, where she used to sigh and mourne alone by her selfe.

The night being over-past with infinite feares and afrights, and bright day saluting the world againe, with the expence of nine houres and more, she fell to her former fruitlesse travailes. Being somewhat sharply bitten with hunger, because the former day and night shee had not tasted any foode: shee made therefore a benefit of necessity, and fed on the greene hearbes so well as she could, not without any piercing afflictions, what should become of her in this extraordinary misery. As shee walked in these pensive meditations, she saw a Goate enter into a Cave, and (within a while after) come forth againe, wandring along thorow the woods. Whereupon she stayed, and entred where she saw the beast issue foorth, where she found two young Kids, yeaned (as it seemed) the selfesame day, which sight was very pleasing to her, and nothing in that distresse could more content her.

As yet, she had milke freshly running in both her brests, by reason of her so late delivery in child bed; wherefore shee lay downe unto the two yong Kids, and taking them tenderly in her armes, suffered each of them to sucke a teate, whereof they made not any refusall, but tooke them as lovingly as their dammes, and from that time forward, they made no distinguishing betweene their damme and her. Thus this unfortunate Lady, having found some company in this solitary desart, fed on herbes and roots, drinking faire running water, and weeping silently to her selfe, so often as she remembred her husband, children, and former dayes past in much better manner. Heere she resolved now to live and dye, being at last deprived both of the damme and yonger Kids also, by theyr wandering further into the neere adjoyning Woods, according to their naturall inclinations; whereby the poore distressed Ladie became more savage and wilde in her daily conditions, then otherwise shee would have bene.

After many monthes were over-passed, at the very same place where she tooke landing; by chance, there arrived another small vessell of certaine Pisans, which remained there divers daies. In this Barke was a Gentleman, named Conrado de Marchesi Malespini, with his holy and vertuous wife, who were returned backe from a Pilgrimage, having visited all the sanctified places that then were in the kingdome of Apulia, and now were bound homeward to their owne abiding. This Gentleman, for the expelling of melancholly perturbations, one especiall day amongst other, with his wife, servants, and wainting hounds, wandred up into the Iland not far from the place of Madam Beritolaes desert dwelling. The hounds questing after game, at last happened on the two Kids where they were feeding, and (by this time) had attained to indifferent growth; and finding themselves thus pursued by the hounds, fled to no other part of the wood, then to the cave where Beritola remained, and seeming as if they sought to be rescued only by her, she sodainly caught up a staffe, and forced the hounds thence to flight.

By this time, Conrado and his wife, who had followed closely after the hounds, was come thither, and seeing what had hapned, looking on the Lady, who was become blacke, swarthy, meager, and hairy, they wondered not a little at her, and she a great deale more at them. When (uppon her request) Conrado had checkt backe his hounds, they prevailed so much by earnest intreaties, to know what she was, and the reason of her living there; that she intirely related her quality, unfortunate accidents, and strange determination for living there. Which when the Gentleman had heard, who very well knew her husband, compassion forced teares from his eyes, and earnestly he laboured by kinde perswasions, to alter so cruell a deliberation; making an honourable offer, for conducting her home to his owne dwelling, where shee should remaine with him in noble respect, as if she were his owne sister, without parting from him, till Fortune should smile as fairely on her, as ever she had done before.

When these gentle offers could not prevaile with her, the Gentleman left his wife in her company, saying, that he would go fetch some foode for her; and because her garments were all rent and torne, hee would bring her other of his wives, not doubting but to winne her thence with them. His wife abode there with Beritola, verie much bemoaning her great disasters: and when both viands and garments were brought, by extremitie of intercession, they caused her to put them on, and also to feede with them, albeit shee protested, that shee would not part thence into any place, where any knowledge should be taken of her. In the end, they perswaded her to go with them into Lunigiana, carrying also with her the two yong Goats and their damme, which were then in the cave altogether, prettily playing before Beritola, to the great admiration of Conrado and his wife, as also the servants attending on them.

When the windes and weather grew favourable for them, Madame Beritola went aboord with Conrado and his Wife, being followed by the two young Goates and their

Damme; and because her name should bee knowne to none but Conrado, and his wife onely, shee would be stiled no otherwise but the Goatherdesse. Merrily, yet gently blew the gale, which brought them to enter the River of Maira, where going on shore, and into their owne Castle, Beritola kept company with the wife of Conrado, but in a mourning habite; and a waiting Gentlewoman of theirs, honest, humble, and very dutifull, the Goates alwayes familiarly keeping them company.

Returne wee now to the Pyrates, which at Ponzo seized on the small Barke wherein Madame Beritola was brought thither, and carried thence away, without any sight or knowledge of her. With such other spoyles as they had taken, they shaped their course for Geneway, and there (by consent of the Patrones of the Galley) made a division of their booties. It came to passe, that (among other things) the Nurse that attended on Beritola, and the two Children with her, fell to the share of one Messer Gasparino d'Oria, who sent them together to his owne House, there to be employed in service as Servants. The Nurse weeping beyond measure for the losse of her Ladie, and bemoaning her owne miserable Fortune, whereinto shee was now fallen with the two young Laddes; after long lamenting, which shee found utterly fruitlesse and to none effect, though she was used as a servant with them, and being but a very poore woman, yet was shee wise and discreetly advised. Wherefore, comforting both her selfe and them so well as she could, and considering the depth of their disaster, shee conceited thus, that if the Children should be knowne, it might redound to their greater danger, and shee be no way advantaged thereby.

Hereupon, hoping that Fortune (earely or late) would alter her stearne malice, and that they might (if they lived) regaine once more their former condition, shee would not disclose them to any one whatsoever, till shee should see the time aptly disposed for it. Being thus determined, to all such as questioned her concerning them, she answered that they were her owne Children, naming the eldest not Geoffrey, but Jehannot de Procida. As for the yongest, shee cared not greatly for changing his name, and therefore wisely informed Geoffrey, upon what reason shee had altered his name, and what danger he might fall into, if he should otherwise be discovered; being not satisfied with thus telling him once, but remembring him thereof verie often, which the gentle youth (being so well instructed by the wise and carefull Nurse) did very warily observe.

The two young Laddes, verie poorely garmented, but much worse hosed and shodde, continued thus in the house of Gasparino, where both they and the Nurse were long time employed about verie base and drudging Offices, which yet they endured with admirable patience. But Jehannot, aged already about sixteene yeeres, having a loftier spirit, then belonged to a slavish servant, despising the basenesse of his servile condition; departed from the drudgery of Messer Gasparino, and going aboord the Gallies which were bound for Alexandria, fortuned into many places, yet none of them affoording him any advancement. In the end, about three or foure yeeres after his departure from Gasparino, being now a brave yong man, and of very goodly forme: he understood, that his father (whom he supposed to be dead) was as yet living, but in captivity, and prisoner to King Charles. Wherefore, despairing of any successefull fortune, he wandred here and there, till he came to Lunigiana, and there (by strange accident) he became servant to Messer Conrado Malespino, where the service proved well liking to them both.

Very sildome times hee had a sight of his Mother, because shee alwayes kept company with Conradoes wife; and yet when they came within view of each other, shee knew not him, nor he her, so much yeres had altred them both from what they were wont to be, and when they saw each other last. Jehannot being thus in the service of Messer Conrado, it fortuned that a daughter of his, named Sophia, being the widdow of one Messer Nicolas Grignam, returned home to her Fathers house. Very beautifull and amiable she was, young likewise, aged but little above sixteene; growing wonderously amorous of Jehannot, and he of her, in extraordinary and most fervent manner: which love was not long without full effect, continuing many moneths before any person could perceyve it: which making them to build on the more assurance, they began to carry their meanes with lesse discretion then is required in such nice cases, and which cannot be too providently managed.

Upon a day, he and she walking to a goodly Wood, plentifully furnished with spreading Trees: having out gone the rest of their company, they made choise of a pleasant place, very daintily shaded and beautified with all sorts of flowers. There they spent some time in amorous talking, beside some other sweete embraces, which though it seemed over-short to them, yet was it so unadvisedly prolonged, that they were on a sodain surprized, first by the mother, and next by Messer Conrado himselfe; who greeving beyond measure, to be thus treacherously dealt withall, caused them to be apprehended by three of his servants; and (without telling them any reason why) led bound to another Castle of his, and fretting with extremity of rage, concluded in his minde, that they should both shamefully be put to death.

The Mother unto this regardlesse daughter, having heard the angrie wordes of her Husband, and how hee would be revenged on the faulty; could not endure that he should be so severe: wherefore, although shee was likewise much afflicted in minde, and reputed her Daughter worthy (for so great an offence) of all cruell punnishment, yet she hasted to her displeased husband, and began to entreate, that hee would not runne on in such a furious spleene, now in his aged yeeres to be the murtherer of his owne childe, and soile his hands in the blood of his servant. Rather he might finde out some milde course for the satisfaction of his anger, by committing them to close imprisonment, there to remaine and mourne for their folly committed. The vertuous and religious Lady alledged so many commendable examples, and used such plenty of moving perswasions, that she quite altred his minde from putting them to death, and hee commanded onely, that they should separately be imprisoned, with little store of food, and lodging of the uneasiest, untill he should otherwise determine of them; and so it was done. What their life now was in captivity and continuall teares, with stricter abstinence then was needefull for them, all this I must commit to your consideration.

Jehannot and Spina remaining in this comfortlesse condition, and an whole yeere being now out-worne, yet Conrado keeping them thus still imprisoned: it came to passe, that Don Pedro King of Arragon, by the meanes of Messer John de Procida, caused the Isle of Sicily to revolt, and tooke it away from King Charles; whereat Conrado (he being of the Ghibbiline faction) not a little rejoyced. Jehannot having intelligence thereof, by some of them that had him in custody, breathing foorth a vehement sighe, spake in this manner. Alas poore miserable wretch as I am! that have already gone begging thorough the world above fouretеene yeeres, in expectation of nothing else but this opportunity; and now it is come, must I be in prison, to the end, that I should never more hope for any future happinesse? And how can I get forth of this prison, except it bee by death onely? How now, replyed the Officer of the Guard? What doth this businesse of great Kings concerne thee? What affayres hast thou in Sicily?

Once more Jehannot sighed extreamly, and returned him this answer. Me thinkes my heart (quoth hee) doeth cleave in sunder, when I call to minde the charge which my Father had there; for although I was but a little boy when I fled thence, yet I can well remember, that I saw him Governor there, at such time as King Manfred lived. The Guard, pursuing on still his purpose, demanded of him, what and who his Father was? My Father (replied Jehannot?) I may now securely speake of him, being out of the perill which neerely concerned me if I had beene discovered: he was the named (and so still if he be living) Henriet Capece, and my name is Geoffrey, and not Jehannot; and I make no doubt, but if I were freed from hence, and might be returned home to Sicily, I should (for his sake) be placed in some authority.

The honest man of the Guard, without seeking after any further information; so soone as he could compasse any leysure, reported all to Messer Conrado, who having heard these newes (albeit he made no shew thereof to the revealer) went to Madam Beritola, graciously demaunding of her, if she had any sonne by her husband, who was called Geoffrey. The Lady replyed in teares, that if her eldest sonne were as yet living, he was so named, and now aged about two and twenty yeeres. Conrado hearing this, imagined this same to be the man; considering further withall, that if it fell out to prove so, hee might have the better meanes of mercie, and closely concealing his daughters shame, joyfully joyne them in marriage together.

Hereupon, he secretly called Jehannot before him, examining him particularly of all his passed life, and finding (by most manifest arguments) that his name was truly Geoffrey, and the eldest son of Henriet Capece, he spake thus to him. Jehannot, thou knowest how great the injuries are that thou hast done me, and my deere daughter; gently intreating thee (as became an honest servant) that thou shouldest alwayes have bene respective of mine honor, and all that appertaine unto me. There are many noble Gentlemen, who sustaining the wrong which thou hast offred me, they would have procured thy shamefull death, which pitty and compassion will not suffer in me. Wherefore seeing (as thou informest me) that thou art honourably derived both by father and mother, I will give end to all thy anguishes, even when thy selfe art so pleased, releasing thee from that captivity wherein I have so long kept thee, and in one instant, reduce thine honor and mine into compleat perfection. As thou knowest my daughter Spina, whom thou hast embraced as a friend (although far unfitting for thee, or her) is a widdow, and her marriage is both great and good; what her manners and conditions are, thou indifferently knowest, and art not ignorant of her father and mother: concerning thine owne estate, as now I purpose not to speake any thing. Therefore, when thou wilt, I am determined, that whereas thou hast immodestly affected her, she shall become thy honest wife, and accepting thee as my sonne, to remaine with me so long as you both please.

Imprisonment had somwhat mishapen Jehannot in his outward forme, but not impaired a jot of his noble spirit; much lesse the true love which he bare his friend. And although most earnestly he desired that which now Conrado had so frankly offered him, and was in his power onely to bestow on him; yet could he not cloud any part of his greatnes, but with a resolved judgement, thus replied. My Lord, affectation of rule, desire of welthy possessions, or any other matter whatsoever, could never make me a traitor to you or yours; but that I have loved, do love, and for ever shal love your beauteous daughter: if that be treason, I do freely confesse it, and will die a thousand deaths before you or any else shall enforce me to deny it, for I hold her highly worthy of my love. If I have bin more unmannerly with her then became me, I have committed but that error, which evermore is so attendant uppon youth; that to deny, is to denie youth also. And if reverend age would but remember, that once he was yong, and measure others offences by his owne, they would not be thoght so great, as you (and many more) account them to be, mine being committed as a friend, and not as an enemy. What you make offer of so willingly, I have alwayes desired; and if I had thought it would have beene granted, long since I had most humbly requested it: and so much the more acceptable would it have bin to me, by how much the further off it stood from my hopes. But if you bee so forward as your words doe witnesse, then feed me not with any further fruitlesse expectation; but rather send me backe to prison, and lay as many afflictions on me as you please. For my endeered love to your daughter Spina, maketh mee to love you the more for her sake, how hardly soever you intreat me; and bindeth me in the greater reverence to you, as being the Father of my fairest friend.

Messer Conrado hearing these words, stood as one confounded with admiration, reputing him to be a man of loftie spirit, and his affection most fervent to his Daughter, which was not a little to his liking. Wherefore, embracing him, and kissing his cheeke, without any longer dallying, hee sent in like manner for his Daughter. Her restraint in prison, had made her lookes meager, pale, and wanne, and very weake was she also of her person, farre differing from the Woman she was wont to be, before her affection to Jehannot. There in presence of her Father, and with free consent of either, they were contracted as man and wife, and the espousals agreed on according to custome. Some few dayes after, (without any ones knowledge of that which was done) having furnished them with all things fit for the purpose, and time aptly serving, that the Mothers should be partakers in this joy; he called his wife, and Madam Beritola, to whom first he spake in this manner.

What will you say Madame, if I cause you to see your eldest Son, not long since married to one of my daughters? Whereunto Beritola thus replied. My Lord, I can say nothing else unto you, but that I shal be much more obliged to you, then already I am; and the rather, because you will let me see the thing which is deerer then mine owne life; and rendering it unto me in such manner as you speake of, you will recall backe some part of my former lost hopes: and with these words, the teares streamed aboundantly from her eyes. Then turning to his wife, he said: And you deere Love, if I shew you such a Son in law, what will you thinke of it? Sir (quoth she) what pleaseth you, must and shall satisfie me, be he gentleman or beggar. Well said Madam, answered Messer Conrado, I hope shortly, to make you both joyfull. So when the amorous couple had recovered their former feature, and honorable garments prepared for them, privately thus he said to Geoffrey; Beyond the joy which already thou art inriched withall, how would it please thee to meete thine owne Mother here? I cannot beleeve Sir (replied Geoffrey) that her greevous misfortunes have suffered her to live so long; and yet, if heaven hath bin so mercifull to her, my joyes were incomparable, for by her gracious counsel, I might well hope to recover no meane happines in Sicily. Soone after, both the mothers were sent for, who were transported with unspeakable joy, when they beheld the so lately married couple: being much amazed what inspiration had guided Messer Conrado to this extraordinary benignity, in joyning Jehannot in marriage with Spina.

Hereupon, Madam Beritola remembring the speeches betweene her and Messer Conrado, began to observe him very advisedly; and by a hidden vertue which long had silently slept in her, and now with joy of spirit awaked, calling to mind the lineatures of her sonnes infancy, without awaiting for any other demonstration, she folded him in her armes with earnest affection. Motherly joy and pity now contended so violently togither, that she was not able to utter one word, the sensitive vertues being so closely combined, that (even as dead) she fell downe in the armes of her Son. And he wondering greatly thereat, making a better recollection of his thoughts, did well remember, that hee had often before seene her in the Castle, without any other knowledge of her. Neverthelesse, by meere instinct of Nature, whose power in such actions declares it selfe to be highly predominant; his very soule assured him, that she was his Mother, and blaming his understanding, that he had not before bene better advised, he threw his armes about her, and wept exceedingly.

Afterward, by the loving paines of Conradoes wife, as also her daughter Spina, Madam Beritola (being recovered from her passionate traunce, and her vitall spirits executing their Offices againe) fell once more to the embracing of her Sonne, kissing him infinite times, with teares and speeches of motherly kindnesse, he likewise expressing the same dutifull humanity to her. Which ceremonious courtesies being passed over and over, to no little joy in all the beholders, beside repetition of their severall misfortunes, Messer Conrado made all knowne to his friends, who were very glad of this new alliance made by him, which was honoured with many solemne feastings. Which being all concluded, Geoffrey having found out fit place and opportunity, for conference with his new created Father, without any sinister opposition, began as followeth.

Honourable Father, you have raised my contentment to the highest degree, and have heaped also many gracious favours on my Noble Mother; but now in the finall conclusion, that nothing may remaine uneffected, which consisteth in your power to performe: I would humbly entreate you, to honour my Mother with your company, at a Feast of my making, where I would gladly also have my Brother present. Messer Gasparino d'Oria (as I have heretofore told you) questing as a common Pyrat on the Seas, tooke us and sent us home to his house as slaves, where (as yet) he detaineth him. I would likewise have you send into Sicily, who informing himselfe more amply in the state of the Countrey, may understand what is become of Henriet my Father, and whether he be living or no. If he be alive, then to know in what condition he is; and being secretly instructed in all things, then to returne backe againe to you.

This motion made by Geoffrey, was so pleasing to Conrado, that without any reference to further leysure, hee dispatched thence two discreete persons, the one to Geneway, and the other to Sicily: he which went for Geneway, having met with Gasparino, earnestly entreated him (on the behalfe of Conrado) to send him the Poore expelled; and his Nurse recounting every thing in order, which Conrado had tolde him, concerning Geoffrey and his mother. When Gasparino had heard the whole discourse, he marvelled greatly thereat, and saide; True it is, that I will doe any thing for Messer Conrado, which may bee to his love and liking, provided, that it lye in my power to performe; and (about some foureteene yeeres since) I brought such a Lad as you seeke for, with his mother, home to my house, whom I will gladly send unto him. But you may tell him from me, that I advise him from over-rash crediting the Fables of Jehannot, that now termes himselfe by the name of Geoffrey, because he is a more wicked boy then he taketh him to be, and so did I finde him.

Having thus spoken, and giving kinde welcome to the Messenger, secretly he called the Nurse unto him, whom hee heedfully examined concerning this case. She having heard the rebellion in the Kingdome of Sicily; and understanding withall that Henriet was yet living, joyfully threw off all her former feare, relating every thing to him orderly, and the reasons moving her to conceale the whole businesse in such manner as shee had done. Gasparino well perceiving, that the report of the Nurse, and the message received from Conrado, varied not in any one circumstance, began the better to credit her words. And being a man most ingenious, making further inquisition into the businesse, by all the possible meanes hee could devise; and finding every thing to yeeld undoubted assurance, ashamed of the vile and base usage wherein he had so long time kept the Lad, and desiring (by his best meanes) to make him amends, he had a beautifull daughter, aged about thirteene yeares, and knowing what manner of man he was, his Father Henriet also yet living, he gave her to him in marriage, with a very bountifull and honourable dowry.

The joviall dayes of feasting being past, he went aboord a Galley with the Poore expelled, his Daughter, the Ambassador, and the Nurse, departing thence to Lericy, where they were nobly welcommed by Messer Conrado, and his Castle being not farre from thence, with an honourable traine they were conducted thither, and entertained with all possible kindnesse. Now concerning the comfort of the Mother, meeting so happily with both her sonnes, the joy of the brethren and mother together, having also found the faithful Nurse, Gasparino and his daughter, in company now with Conrado and his wife, friends, familiars, and all generally in a Jubilee of rejoycing: it exceedeth capacity in mee to expresse it, and therefore I referre it to your more able imagination.

In the time of this mutuall contentment, to the end that nothing might be wanting to compleat and perfect this universall joy; our Lord, a most abundant bestower where he beginneth, added long wished tydings concerning the life and good estate of Henry Capece. For, even as they were feasting, and the concourse great of worthy guests, both Lords and Ladies; the first service was scarsely set on the Tables, but the Ambassador which was sent to Sicily, arrived there before them. Among many other important matters, he spake of Henriet, who being so long a time detained in prison by King Charles, when the commotion arose in the Citty against the King; the people (grudging at Henriets long imprisonment) slew the Guards, and set him at liberty. Then as capitall enemie to King Charles, hee was created Captaine Generall, following the chase, and killing the French.

Now by this meanes, he grew great in the grace of King Pedro, who replanted him in all the goods and honours which he had before, with verie high and eminent authority. Hereunto the Ambassador added, that hee was entertayned with extraordinary grace, and delivery of publike joy and exaltation, when his Wife and Sonne were knowne to be living, of whom no tydings had at any time bene heard, since the houre of his surprizall. Moreover, that a swift winged Bark was now sent thither (upon the happy hearing of this newes) well furnished with noble Gentlemen, to attend till their returning backe. We neede to make no doubt concerning the tydings brought by this Ambassadour, nor of the Gentlemens welcome, thus sent to Madame Beritola and Geoffrey; who before they would sit downe at the Table, saluted Messer Conrado and his kinde Lady (on the behalfe of Henriet) for all the great graces extended to her and her Sonne, with promise of any thing, lying in the power of Henriet, to rest continually at their command. The like they did to Signior Gasparino (whose liberall favours came unlooked for) with certaine assurance, that when Henriet should understand what he had done for his other Sonne, the Poore expelled, there would be no defaylance of reciprocall courtesies.

As the longest joyes have no perpetuity of lasting, so all these graceful ceremonies had their conclusion, with as many sighes and teares at parting, as joyes abounded at their first encountring. Imagine then, that you see such aboord, as were to have here no longer abiding, Madam Beritola and Geoffrey, with the rest; as the Poore expelled, the so late married Wives, and the faithfull Nurse bearing them company. With prosperous windes they arrived in Sicily, where the Wife, Sonnes, and Daughters, were joyfully met by Henriet at Palermo, and with such honourable pompe, as a case so important equally deserved. The Histories make further mention, that there they lived (a long while after) in much felicitie, with thankfull hearts (no doubt) in Heaven, in acknowledgement of so many great mercies received.

THE SEVENTH NOVELL

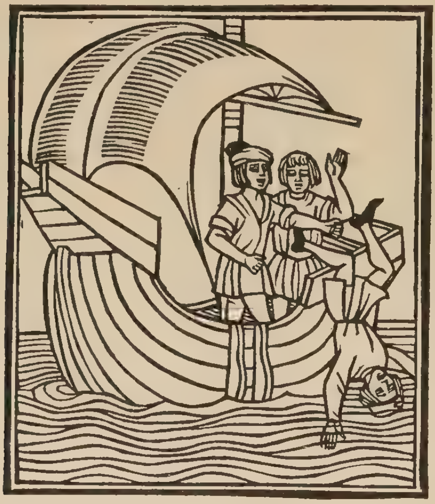
A LIVELY DEMONSTRATION, THAT THE BEAUTY OF A WOMAN (OFTENTIMES) IS VERY HURTFULL TO HER SELFE, AND THE OCCASION OF MANY EVILS, YEA, AND OF DEATH, TO DIVERS MEN.

THE *Soldan of Babylon sent one of his Daughters, to be joyned in marriage with the King of Cholcos, who by divers accidents (in the space of foure yeeres) happened into the custodie of nine men, and in sundry places. At length, being restored backe to her Father, she went to the saide King of Cholcos, as a Maid, and as at first she was intended to be his wife.*

PERADVENTURE the Novell related by Madam Æmillia, did not extend it selfe so farre in length, as it mooved compassion in the Ladies mindes, hearing the hard fortunes of Beritola and her Children, which had incited them to weeping: but that it pleased the Queen (upon the Tales conclusion) to command Pamphilus, to follow next in order with his Discourse; and he being thereto very obedient, began in this manner.

It is a matter of no meane difficulty (vertuous Ladies) for us to take intire knowledge of every thing we doe, because (as oftentimes hath bene observed) many men, imagining if they were rich, they should live securely, and without any cares. And therefore, not onely have theyr prayers and intercessions aimed at that end, but also their studies and daily endevours, without refusall of any paines or perils have not meanely expressed their hourely solicitude. And although it hath happened accordingly to them, and their covetous desires fully accomplished; yet at length they have mette with such kinde people, who likewise thirsting after their wealthy possessions, have bereft them of life, being their kinde and intimate friends, before they attained to such riches. Some other, being of lowe and base condition, by adventuring in many skirmishes and foughten battels, trampling in the bloud of their brethren and friends, have bene mounted to the soveraigne dignity of Kingdomes (beleeving that therein consisted the truest happinesse) but bought with the deerest price of their lives. For, beside their infinit cares and feares wherewith such greatnesse is continually attended, at the royall Tables, they have drunke poyson in a Golden pot. Many other in like manner (with most earnest appetite) have coveted beauty and bodily strength, not foreseeing with any judgement, that these wishes were not without perill; when being endued with them, they either have bene the occasion of their death, or such a lingering lamentable estate of life, as death were a thousand times more welcome to them.

But, because I would not speake particularly of all our fraile and humane affections, I dare assure ye, that there is not any one of these desires to be elected among us mortals, with entire forsight or providence, warrantable against their ominous yssue. Wherefore, if we would walke directly, wee should dispose our willes and affections, to be guided onely by him, who best knoweth what is needfull for us, and will bestow them at his good pleasure. Nor let me lay this blamefull imputation uppon men onely, for offending in many things through over lavish desires: because you your selves (gracious Ladies) sinne highly in one, as namely, in coveting to be beautifull. So that it is not sufficient for you, to enjoy those beauties bestowne on you by Nature; but you practice to increase them by the rarities of Art. Wherefore, let it not offend you, that I tell you the hard fortune of a faire Sarazine, to whom it hapned by straunge adventures, that within the compasse of foure yeares, nine severall times to be married, and onely for her beauty.



It is now a long time since, that there lived a Soldane in Babylon, named Beminidab, to whom (while he lived) many things happened, answerable to his owne desires. Among divers other Children both male and female, hee had a daughter called Alathiella, and shee (according to the common voyce of every one that saw her) was the fayrest Lady then living in all the world. And because the King of Cholcos had wonderfully assisted him, in a most valiant foughten battell against a mighty Armie of Arabians, who on a sodaine had assailed him; he demanded his faire daughter in marriage, which likewise was kindly granted to him. Whereupon a goodly and well-armed Ship was prepared for her, with full furnishment of all necessary provision, and accompanied with an honourable traine both of Lords and Ladies, as also most costly and sumptuous accoustrements; commending her to the mercy of heaven, in this maner was she sent away.

The time being propitious for their parting thence, the Mariners hoised their sayles, leaving the port of Alexandria, and sayling prosperously many dayes together. When they had past the Countrey of Sardinia, and (as they imagined) were well neere to their journeyes end; sodainely arose boysterous and contrary windes, which were so impetuous beyond all measure, and so tormented the Ship wherein the Lady was; that the Mariners seeing no signe of comfort, gave over all hope of escaping with life. Neverthelesse, as men most expert in implacable dangers, they laboured to their uttermost power, and contended with infinite blustring tempests, for the space of two dayes and nights together, hoping the third day would prove more favourable. But therein they saw themselves deceyved, for the violence continued still, encreasing in the night time more and more, being not any way able to comprehend either where they were, or what course they tooke, neither by Marinall judgement, or any apprehension else whatsoever, the heavens were so clouded, and the nights darkenesse so extreame.

Beeing (unknowne to them) neere the Isle of Majorica, they felt the Shippe to split in the bottome: by meanes whereof, perceiving now no hope of escaping (every one caring for himselfe, and not any other) they threw foorth a Squiffe on the troubled waves, reposing more confidence of safety that way, then abiding any longer in the broken ship. Howbeit such as were first descended downe, made stout resistance against all other followers, with their drawne weapons: but safety of life so far prevayled, that what with the Tempests violence, and over lading of the Squiffe, it sunke to the bottome, and all perished that were therein. The Ship being thus split, and more then halfe full of water, tossed and tormented by the blustring windes, first one way, and then another: was at last driven into a strond of the Isle Majorica, no other persons therein remaining, but onely the Lady and her women, all of them (through the rude tempest, and their owne conceived feare) lying still, as if they were more then halfe dead. And there, within a stones cast of the neighboring shore the ship (by the rough surging billowes) was fixed fast in the sands, and so continued all the rest of the night, without any further molestation of the windes.

When day appeared, and the violent stormes were more mildly appeased, the Ladie, who seemed well-neere dead, lifted up her head, and began (weake as she was) to call first one, and then another: but shee called in vaine, for such as she named were farre enough from her. Wherefore, hearing no answere, nor seeing any one, she wondred greatly, her feares encreasing then more and more. Raising her selfe so well as shee could, she beheld the Ladies that were of her company, and some other of her women, lying still without any stirring: whereupon, first jogging one, and then another, and calling them severally by their names; shee found them bereft of understanding, and even as if they were dead, their hearts were so quayled, and their feare so over-ruling, which was no meane dismay to the poore Lady her selfe. Neverthelesse, necessity now being her best counsellor, seeing her selfe thus all alone, and not knowing in what place shee was, shee used such meanes to them that were living, that (at the last) they came to better knowledge of themselves. And being unable to guesse, what was become of the men and Marriners, seeing the Ship also driven on the sands, and filled with water, she began with them to lament most greevously: and now it was about the houre of mid day, before they could descry any person on the shore, or any els to pity them in so urgent a necessity.

At length, noone being past, a Gentleman named Bajazeth, attended by divers of his followers on horsebacke, and returning from a Countrie house belonging to him, chanced to ride by on the sands. Uppon sight of the Ship lying in that case, he imagined truely what had hapned, and commanded one of his men to enter aboord it, which (with some difficultie) hee did, to resolve his Lord what remained therein. There hee found the faire yong Lady, with such small store of company as was left her, fearefully hidden under the prow of the Ship. So soone as they saw him, they held up their hands, wofully desiring mercy of him: but he perceiving their lamentable condition, and that hee understoode not what they saide to him, their affliction grew the greater, labouring by signes and gestures, to give him knowledge of their misfortune.

The servant gathering what he could by their outward behaviour, declared to his Lord what hee had seene in the Ship; who caused the Women to be brought on shore, and all the precious things remaining with them; conducting them with him to a place not far off, where with food and warmth he gave them comfort. By the rich garments which the Lady was cloathed withall, he reputed her to be a Gentlewoman well derived, as the great reverence done to her by the rest, gave him good reason to conceive. And although her lookes were pale and wan, as also her person mightily altered, by the tempestuous violence of the Sea: yet notwithstanding, she appeared faire and lovely in the eye of Bajazeth, whereupon forthwith he determined, that if she were not married, hee would enjoy her as his owne in marriage: or if he could not winne her to bee his wife, yet (at the least) shee should be his friend, because she remained now in his power.

Bajazeth was a man of stearne lookes, rough and harsh both in speech and behaviour; yet causing the Lady to be honourably used divers dayes together, shee became thereby well comforted and recovered. And seeing her beautie to exceede all comparison, he was afflicted beyond measure, that he could not understand her, nor she him, whereby hee could not know of whence or what she was. His amorous flames encreasing more and more; by kinde, courteous, and affable actions, he laboured to compasse what he aymed at. But all his endeavour proved to no purpose, for she refused all familiar privacie with him, which so much the more kindled the fury of his fire. This being well observed by the Lady, having now remained there a moneth and more, and collecting by the customes of the Countrey, that she was among Turkes; and in such a place, where although she were knowne, yet it would little advantage her; beside, that long protraction of time would provoke Bajazeth by faire meanes or force to obtaine his will: she propounded to her selfe (with magnanimity of spirit) to tread all misfortunes under her feete, commanding her Women (whereof shee had but three now remaining alive) that they should not disclose what she was, except it were in some such place, where manifest signes might yeeld hope of regaining their liberty. Moreover, she admonished them stoutly to defend their honour and chastity; affirming, that she had absolutely resolved with her selfe, that never any other should enjoy her, but her intended husband: wherein her women did much commend her, promising to preserve their reputation, according as shee had commanded.

Day by day, were the torments of Bajazeth wonderfully augmented, yet still his kinde offers scornefully refused, and he as farre off from compassing his desires, as when he first beganne to moove the matter: wherefore, perceiving that all faire courses served to no effect, hee resolved to compasse his purpose by craft and subtilty, reserving rigorous extremitie for his finall conclusion. And having once observed, that wine was verie pleasing to the Lady, she being never used to drinke any at all, because (by her Countries Law) it was forbidden her: and no meane store having beene lately brought to Bajazeth in a Barke of Geneway: hee resolved to surprize her by meanes thereof, as a cheefe minister of Venus, to heate the coolest blood. And seeming now in his outward behaviour, as if hee had given over his amorous pursuite, and which she strove by all her best endeavours to withstand: one night, after a very majesticke and solemne manner, hee prepared a delicate and sumptuous supper, whereto the Lady was invited: and hee had given order, that hee who attended on her Cup, should serve her with many Wines compounded and mingled together; which hee accordingly performed, as being cunning enough in such occasions.

Alathiella mistrusting no such trechery intended against her, and liking the Wines pleasing taste extraordinarily, dranke more then stoode with her precedent modest resolution, and forgetting all her passed adversities, became very frolicke and merry: so that seeing some women dance after the manner observed there in Majorica, she also fell to dauncing according to the Alexandrian custome. Which when Bajazeth beheld, he imagined the victory to be more then halfe wonne, and his hearts desire verie neere the obtaining: plying her still with wine upon wine, and continuing this revelling the most part of the night.

At the length, the invited guests being all gone, the Lady retyred then to her chamber, attended on by none but Bajazeth himselfe, and as familiarly as if he had bene one of her women, shee no way contradicting his bold intrusion, so farre had wine over-gone her sences, and prevailed against all modest bashfulnesse. These wanton embracings, strange to her that had never tasted them before, yet pleasing beyond measure, by reason of his treacherous advantage; afterward drew on many more of the like carowsing meetings, without so much as thought of her passed miseries, or those more honourable and chaste respects, that ever ought to attend on Ladies.

Now, Fortune envying thus their stollen pleasures, and that shee, being the purposed wife of a potent King, should thus become the wanton friend of a much meaner man, whose onely glory was her shame; altered the course of their too common pastimes, by preparing a farre greater infelicity for them. This Bajazeth had a Brother, aged about five and twenty yeeres, of most compleate person, in the very beauty of his time, and fresh as the sweetest smelling Rose, he being named Amurath. After he had once seene this Ladie (whose faire feature pleased him beyond all womens else) shee seemed in his sodaine apprehension, both by her outward behaviour and civill apparancie, highly to deserve his verie best opinion, for she was not meanely entred into his favour. Now hee found nothing to his hinderance, in obtaining the heighth of his hearts desire, but onely the strict custodie and guard, wherein his brother Bajazeth kept her: which raised a cruell conceite in his minde, wherein followed (not long after) as cruell an effect.

It came to passe, that at the same time; in the Port of the Cittie, called Caffa, there lay then a Ship laden with Merchandize, being bound thence for Smyrna, of which Ship two Geneway Merchants (being brethren) were the Patrons and Owners, who had given direction for hoysing the sailes to depart thence when the winde should serve. With these two Genewayes Amurath had covenanted, for himselfe to goe aboord the ship the night ensuing, and the Lady in his company. When night was come, having resolved with himselfe what was to be done: in a disguised habite hee went to the house of Bajazeth, who stood not any way doubtfull of him, and with certaine of his most faithfull Confederates (whom he had sworne to the intended action) they hid themselves closely in the house. After some part of the night was over-past, he knowing the severall lodgings both of Bajazeth and Alathiella, slew his brother soundly sleeping; and seizing on the Lady, whom he found awake and weeping, threatned to kill her also, if she made any noyse. So, being well furnished with the greater part of worldly Jewels belonging to Bajazeth, unheard or undescried by any body, they went presently to the Port, and there (without any further delay) Amurath and the Lady were received into the Ship, but his companions returned backe againe; when the Mariners, having their sailes ready set, and the winde aptly fitting for them, lanched forth merrily into the maine.

You may well imagine, that the Ladie was extraordinarily afflicted with greefe for her first misfortune; and now this second chancing so sodainely, must needs offend her in greater manner: but Amurath did so kindely comfort her with milde, modest, and manly perswasions, that all remembrance of Bajazeth was quickely forgotten, and shee became converted to lovely demeanor, even when Fortune prepared a fresh miserie for her, as not satisfied with those whereof shee had tasted already. The Lady being unequalled for beauty (as I said before) her behaviour also in such exquisit and commendable kinde expressed; the two Brethren owners of the Ship, became so deeply enamored of her, that forgetting all their more serious affaires, they studied by all possible meanes, to be pleasing and gracious in her eye, yet with such a carefull carriage, that Amurath should neither see, or suspect it.

When the Brethren had imparted their loves extreamity each to the other, and plainely perceyved, that though they were equally in their fiery torments, yet their desires were utterly contrary: they began severally to consider, that gaine gotten by

Merchandize, admitted an equall and honest division, but this purchase was of a different quality, pleading the title of a sole possession, without any partner or intruder. Fearefull and jealous were they both, least either should ayme at the others intention, yet willing enough to shake hands, in ridding Amurath out of the way, who onely was the hinderer of their hopes. Whereupon they concluded together, that on a day when the Ship sayled on very swiftly, and Amurath was sitting upon the Decke, studiously observing how the Billowes combatted each with other, and not suspecting any such treason in them towards him: stealing softly behinde him, sodainely they threw him into the Sea, the shippe floating on above halfe a Leagues distance, before any perceived his fall into the Sea.

When the Ladie heard thereof, and saw no likely meanes of recovering him againe, she fell to her wonted teares and lamentations: but the two Lovers came quickely to comfort her, using kinde words and pithy perswasions (albeit she understood them not, or at the most very little) to appease the violence of her passions; and, to speak uprightly, she did not so much bemoane the losse of Amurath, as the multiplying of her owne misfortunes, still one succeeding in the necke of another. After divers long and well delivered Orations, as also very faire and courteous behaviour, they had indifferently pacified her complainings: they beganne to discourse and commune with themselves, which of them had most right and title to Alathiella, and consequently ought to enjoy her. Now that Amurath was gone, each pleaded his priviledge to bee as good as the others, both in the Ship, Goods, and all advantages else whatsoever happening: which the elder brother absolutely denied, alleadging first his propriety of birth, a reason sufficient, whereby his younger ought to give him place: Likewise, his right and interest both in the ship and goods, to be more then the others, as being heire to his father, and therefore in justice to be highest preferred. Last of all, that his strength onely threw Amurath into the Sea, and therefore gave him the full possession of his prize, no right at all remaining to his brother.

From temperate and calme speeches, they fell to frownes and ruder Language, which heated their blood in such violent manner, that forgetting brotherly affection, and all respect of Parents or Friends, they drew forth their Ponyards, stabbing each other so often and desperately, that before any in the shippe had the power or meanes to part them, both of them being very dangerously wounded, the younger brother fell downe dead: the elder being in little better case, by receiving so many perilous hurts, remained (neverthelesse) living. This unhappy accident displeased the Lady very highly, seeing her selfe thus left alone, without the help or counsell of any bodie; and fearing greatly, least the anger of the two Brethrens Parents and Friends, should now bee laide to her charge, and thereon follow severity of punishment. But the earnest entreaties of the wounded surviver, and their arrivall at Smirna soone after, delivered him from the danger of death, gave some ease to her sorrow, and there with him she went on shore.

Remaining there with him in a common Inne, while he continued in the Chirurgians cure, the fame of her singular and much admired beauty was soone spread abroad throughout all the City: and amongst the rest, to the hearing of the Prince of Ionia, who lately before (on very urgent occasions) was come to Smyrna. This rare rumour, made him desirous to see her, and after he had seene her, shee seemed farre fairer in his eye, then common report had noised her to be, and suddenly grew so enamored of her, that she was the onely Idea of his best desires. Afterward, understanding in what manner shee was brought thither, he devised how to make her his own, practising all possible meanes to accomplish it: which when the wounded Brothers Parents heard of, they not onely made tender of their willingnesse therein, but also immediately sent her to him: a matter most highly pleasing to the Prince, and likewise to the Lady her selfe; because she thought now to be freed from no meane perill, which (otherwise) the wounded Merchants friends might have inflicted uppon her.

The Prince perceiving, that beside her matchlesse beauty, shee had the true character of Royall behaviour; greeved the more, that he could not be further informed of what Countrey shee was. His opinion being so stedfastly grounded, that (lesse then Noble) she could not be, was a motive to set a keener edge on his affection towardes her, yet not to enjoy her as in honourable and loving complement onely, but as his espoused Lady and Wife. Which appearing to her by apparant demonstrations, though entercourse of speech wanted to confirme it; remembrance of her so many sad disasters, and being now in a most noble and respected condition, her comfort enlarged it selfe with a setled hope, her feares grew free from any more mollestations, and her beauties became the onely theame and argument of private and publike conference in all Natolia, that (well-neere) there was no other discourse, in any Assembly whatsoever.

Heereupon the Duke of Athens, beeing young, goodly, and valiant of person, as also a neere Kinsman to the Prince, had a desire to see her; and under colour of visiting his noble Kinsman, (as oftentimes before he had done) attended with an honourable traine, to Smirna he came, being there most royally welcommed, and bounteously feasted. Within some few dayes of his there being, conference passed betweene them, concerning the rare beauty of the Ladie; the Duke questioning the Prince, whether shee was of such wonder, as fame had acquainted the World withall? Whereto the Prince replyed; Much more (Noble kinsman) then can bee spoken of, as your owne eyes shall witnesse, without crediting any words of mine. The Duke soliciting the Prince thereto very earnestly, they both went together to see her; and she having before heard of their comming, adorned her selfe the more Majestically, entertaining them with ceremonious demeanor (after her Countries custome) which gave most gracious and unspeakable acceptation.

At the Princes affable motion, shee sate downe betweene them, their delight being beyond expression, to behold her, but abridged of much more felicitie, because they understood not any part of her Language: so that they could have no other conference, but by lookes and outward signes onely; and the more they beheld her, the more they marvelled at her rare perfections, especially the Duke, who hardly credited that shee was a mortall creature. Thus not perceyving, what deepe carowses of amorous poyson his eyes dranke downe by the meere sight of her, yet thinking thereby onely to bee satisfied, hee lost both himselfe and his best sences, growing in love (beyond all measure) with her. When the Prince and he were parted from her, and hee was at his owne private amorous meditations in his Chamber, he reputed the Prince farre happier then any man else whatsoever, by the enjoying of such a peerelesse beauty.

After many intricate and distracted cogitations, which molested his braines incessantly, regarding more his loves wanton heate, then reason, kindred, and honourable hospitality; he resolutely determined (whatsoever ensued thereupon) to bereave the Prince of his faire felicity, that none but himselfe might possesse such a treasure, which he esteemed to bee the height of all happinesse. His courage being conformable to his bad intent, with all hast it must be put in execution; so that equity, justice, and honesty, being quite abandoned, nothing but subtile stratagems were now his meditations.

On a day, according to a fore-compacted treachery which he had ordered with a Gentleman of the Princes Chamber, who was named Churiacy, he prepared his horses to be in readinesse, and dispatched all his affaires else for a sodaine departure. The night following, hee was secretly conveyed by the said Churiacy, and a friend of his with him (being both armed) into the Princes Chamber, where he (while the Ladie was soundly sleeping) stood at a gazing window towards the Sea, naked in his shirt, to take the coole ayre, because the season was exceeding hot. Having formerly enstructed his friend what was to be done, very softly they stept to the Prince, and running their weapons quite thorow his bodie, immediately they threw him forth of the window.

Here you are to observe, that the Pallace was seated on the Sea shore, and verie high, and the Window whereat the Prince then stood looking foorth, was directly over divers houses, which the long continuance of time, and incessant beating on by the surges of the Sea, had so defaced and ruined them, as seldome they were visited by any person; whereof the Duke having knowledge before, was the easier perswaded that the falling of the Princes body in so vast a place, could neither bee heard or descryed by any. The Duke and his Companion, having thus executed what they came for, proceeded yet in their cunning a little further; casting a strangling Cord about the necke of Churiacy, seemed as if they hugged and imbraced him: but drew it with so maine strength, that he never spake word after, and so threw him downe after the Prince.

This done, and plainely perceiving that they were not heard or seene, either by the Lady, or any other: the Duke tooke a light in his hand, going on to the bed, where the Lady lay most sweetely sleeping; whom the more he beheld, the more he admired and commended: but if in her garments shee appeared so pleasing, what did shee now in a bed of such state and Majestie? Being no way daunted with his so late committed sin, but swimming rather in surfet of joy, his hands all bloody, and his soule much more ugly; he laide him downe on the bed by her, bestowing infinite kisses and embraces on her, she supposing him to be the Prince all this while, not opening her eyes to bee otherwise resolved. But this was not the delight he aymed at, neither did he thinke it safe for him, to delay time with any longer tarrying there: Wherefore, having his agents at hand fit and convenient for the purpose, they surprized her in such sort, that shee could not make any noyse or outcry, and carrying her through the same false posterne, whereat themselves had entred, laying her in a Princely litter; away they went with all possible speede, not tarrying in any place, untill they were arrived neere Athens. But thither he would not bring her, because himselfe was a married man, but rather to a goodly Castle of his owne, not distant farre from the City; where he caused her to bee kept very secretly (to her no little greefe and sorrow) yet attended on and served in most honourable manner.

The Gentlemen usually attending on the Prince, having waited all the next morning till noone, in expectation of his rising, and hearing no stirring in the Chamber, did thrust at the doore, which was but onely closed together, and finding no body there, they presently imagined, that he was privately gone to some other place, where (with the Ladie, whom he so deerely affected) hee might remaine some few dayes for his more contentment, and so they rested verily perswaded. Within some few dayes following, while no other doubt came in question, the Princes Foole, entering by chance among the ruined houses, where lay the dead bodies of the Prince and Churiacy: tooke hold of the cord about Churiacyes necke, and so went along dragging it after him. The dead body being knowne to many, with no meane mervaile how he should bee murthered in so vile manner: by gifts and faire perswasions they wonne him to bring them to the place where he found it. And there (to the no little greefe of the whole Cittie) they found the Princes body also, which they caused to bee intered with all the most Majesticke pompe that might be.

Upon further inquisition, who should commit so horrid a deede, perceyving likewise that the Duke of Athens was not to be found, but was closely gone: they judged (according to the truth) that he had his hand in this bloody businesse, and had carried away the Lady with him. Immediately, they elected the Princes brother to bee their Lord and Soveraigne, inciting him to revenge so horrid a wrong, and promising to assist him with their utmost power. The new chosen Prince being assured afterward, by other more apparant and remarkeable proofes, that his people informed him with nothing but truth: sodainly, and according as they had concluded, with the help of neighbors, kindred and frends, collected from divers places; he mustred a good and powerfull army, marching on towards Athens, to make war against the Duke.

No sooner heard he of this warlike preparation made against him, but he likewise levied forces for his owne defence, and to his succour came many great States: among whom, the Emperor of Constantinople sent his sonne Constantine, attended on by his Nephew Emanuell, with Troopes of faire and towardly force, who were honourably welcommed and entertained by the Duke, but much more by the Dutchesse, because shee was their sister in Law.

Military provision thus proceeding on daily more and more, the Dutches making choise of a fit and convenient houre, took these two Princes with her to a with-drawing Chamber; and there in flouds of teares flowing from her eyes, wringing her hands, and sighing incessantly, she recounted the whole History, occasion of the warre, and how dishonourably the Duke dealt with her about this strange woman, whom hee purposed to keepe in despight of her, as thinking that she knew nothing therof, and complaining very earnestly unto them, entreated that for the Dukes honour, and her comfort, they would give their best assistance in this case.

The two young Lords knew all this matter, before shee thus reported it to them; and therefore, without staying to listen [to] her any longer, but comforting her so wel as they could, with promise of their best emploied paines: being informd by her, in what place the Lady was so closely kept they took their leave, and parted from her. Often they had heard the Lady much commended, and her incomparable beauty highly extolled, yea even by the Duke himselfe; which made them the more desirous to see her: wherfore earnestly they solicited him to let them have a sight of her, and he (forgetting what happened to the Prince, by shewing her so unadvisedly to him) made them promise to grant their request. Causing a very magnificent dinner to be prepared, and in a goodly garden, at the Castle where the Lady was kept: on the morrow, attended on by a smal traine, away they rode to dine with her.

Constantine being seated at the Table, hee began (as one confounded with admiration) to observe her judiciously, affirming secretly to his soule that he had never seene so compleat a woman before; and allowing it for justice, that the Duke or any other whosoever, if (to enjoy so rare a beauty) they had committed treason, or any mischeefe els beside, yet in reason they ought to be held excused. Nor did he bestow so many lookes upon her, but his praises infinitely surpassed them, as thinking that he could not sufficiently commend her, following the Duke step by step in affection; for being now growne amorous of her, and remembrance of the intended warre utterly abandoned; no other thoughts could come neerer him but how to bereave the Duke of her, yet concealing his love, and not imparting it to any one.

While his fancies were thus amorously set on fire, the time came, that they must make head against the Prince, who already was marching with in the Dukes dominions: wherfore the Duke, Constantine, and all the rest, according to a counsel held among them, went to defend certaine of the Frontiers, to the end that the Prince might passe no further. Remaining there divers dayes together, Constantine (who could thinke on nothing else but the beautiful Lady) considered with himself, that while the Duke was now so farre from her, it was an easie matter to compasse his intent: Hereupon, the better to colour his present returne to Athens, he seemed to be surprized with a sudden extreame sicknesse, in regard whereof (by the Dukes free license, and leaving all his power to his Cosen Emanuel) forthwith he journyed backe to Athens. After some conference had with his sister, about her dishonourable wrongs endured at his hands onely, by the Lady, he solemnly protested, that if she were so pleased, hee would aide her powerfully in the matter, by taking her from the place where shee was, and never more afterward, to be seene in that Country any more.

The Dutchesse being faithfully perswaded, that he would do this onely for her sake, and not in any affection he bare to the Lady, answered, that it highly pleased her; alwayes provided, that it might be performed in such sort, as the Duke her husband should never understand, that ever she gave any consent thereto; which Constantine sware unto her by many deepe oaths, whereby she referred all to his owne disposition. Constantine heereupon secretly prepared in a readinesse a subtile Barke, sending it in an evening, neere to the Garden where the Lady resorted; having first informed the people which were in it, fully what was to be done. Afterwards, accompanied with some other of his attendants, he went to the Palace to the Lady, where he was gladly entertained, not onely by such as wayted on her, but also by the Lady her selfe.

Leading her along by the arme towards the Garden, attended on by two of her servants, and two of his owne; seeming as if he was sent from the Duke, to conferre with her: they walked alone to a Port opening on the Sea, which standing ready open, upon a signe given by him to one of his complices, the Barke was brought close to the shore; and the Ladie being sodainly seized on, was immediately conveyed into it; and he returning backe to her people, with his sword drawne, said: Let no man stirre, or speake a word, except he be willing to loose his life: for I intend not to rob the Duke of his faire friend, but to expell the shame and dishonor that he hath offered to my Sister: no one being so hardy as to returne him any answer. Aboord went Constantine with his consorts, and sitting neere to the Lady, who wrung her hands, and wept bitterly; he commaunded the Mariners to launch forth, flying away on the wings of the winde, till about the breake of day following, they arrived at Melasso. There they tooke landing, and reposed on shore for some few dayes, Constantine labouring to comfort the Lady, even as if she had bene his owne Sister, shee having good cause to curse her infortunate beauty.

Going aboord the Barke againe, within few dayes they came to Setalia, and there fearing the reprehension of his father, and least the Lady should be taken from him; it pleased Constantine to make his stay, as in a place of no meane security. And (as before) after much kinde behaviour used towards the Lady, without any meanes in her selfe to redresse the least of all these great extremities, she became more milde and affable, for discontentment did not a jot quaile her.

While occurrences passed on in this manner, it fortuned, that Osbech the King of Turky (who was in continuall war with the

Emperour) came by accident to Lajazzo: and hearing there how lasciviously Constantine spent his time in Setalia, with a Lady which he had stolne, being but weake and slenderly guarded; in the night with certaine well provided ships, his men and he entred the town, and surprized many people in their beds, before they knew of their enimies comming, killing such as stood upon their defence against them, (among whom was Constantine) and burning the whole Towne, brought their booty and prisoners aboord their Shippes, wherewith they returned backe to Lajazzo. Being thus come to Lajazzo, Osbech who was a brave and gallant young man, upon a review of the pillage, found the faire Lady, whom he knew to be the beloved of Constantine, because shee was found lying on his bed. Without any further delay, he made choice of her to be his wife; causing his nuptials to be honourably solemnized, and many moneths he lived there in great joy with her.

But before occasions grew to this effect, the Emperour made a confederacie with Bassano, King of Cappadocia, that hee should descend with his forces, one way upon Osbech, and he would assault him with his power on the other. But he could not so conveniently bring this to passe, because the Emperour would not yeeld to Bassano, in any unreasonable matter he demanded. Neverthelesse, when hee understoode what had happened to his Sonne (for whom his greefe was beyond all measure) hee graunted the King of Cappadociaes request; soliciting him with all instancy, to be the more speedy in assayling Osbech. It was not long, before hee heard of this conjuration made against him; and therefore hee speedily mustered up all his forces, ere he would be encompassed by two such potent kings, and marched on to meete the King of Cappadocia, leaving his Ladie and Wife (for her safety) at Lajazzo, in the custodie of a true and loyall Servant of his.

Within a short while after, he drew neere the Campe belonging to the King of Cappadocia, where boldly he gave him battell; chancing therein to be slaine, his Army broken and discomfited, by meanes whereof, the King of Cappadocia remaining Conquerour, marched on towardes Lajazzo, every one yeelding him obeysance all the way as he went. In the meane space, the servant to Osbech, who was named Antiochus, and with whom the faire Ladie was left in guard; although hee was aged, yet seeing shee was so extraordinarily beautifull, he fell in love with her, forgetting the solemne vowes he had made to his master. One happinesse he had in this case to helpe him, namely, that he understood and could speake her Language: a matter of no meane comfort to her, who constrainedly had lived divers yeeres together, in the state of a deafe or dumbe Woman, because every where else they understoode her not, nor shee them, but by shewes and signes.

This benefite of familiar conference, beganne to embolden his hopes, elevate his courage, and make him seeme more youthfull in his owne opinion, then any ability of body could speake unto him, or promise him in the possession of her, who was so farre beyond him, and so unequall to be enjoyed by him; yet to advance his hopes a great deale higher, Newes came, that Osbech was vanquished and slaine, and that Bassano made every where havocke of all: whereon they concluded together, not to tarrie there any longer, but storing themselves with the goods of Osbech, secretly they departed thence to Rhodes. Being seated there in some indifferent abiding, it came to passe, that Antiochus fell into a deadly sickenesse, to whom came a Cyprian Merchant, one much esteemed by him, as beeing an intimate friend and kinde acquaintance, and in whom hee reposed no small confidence. Feeling his sickenesse to encrease more and more upon him dayly, hee determined, not onely to leave such wealth as hee had to this Merchant, but the faire

Lady likewise. And calling them both to his beds side, he spake in this manner.

Deere Love, and my most worthily respected friend, I perceive plainly and infallibly, that I am drawing neere unto my end, which much discontenteth me; because my hope was to have lived longer in this world, for the enjoying of your kinde and most esteemed company. Yet one thing maketh my death very pleasing and welcome to me; namely, that lying thus in my bed of latest comfort in this life, I shall expire and finish my course, in the armes of those two persons, whome I most affected in all this world, as you my ever-deerest friend, and you faire Lady, whom (since the very first sight of you) I loved and honoured in my soule. Irkesome and verie greevous it is to me, that (if I dye) I shall leave you here a stranger, without the counsaile and helpe of any bodie: and yet much more offensive would it become, if I had not such a friend as you heere present, who (I am faithfully perswaded) will have the like care and respect of her (even for my sake) as of my selfe, if time had allotted my longer tarrying here. And therefore (worthy friend) most earnestly I desire you, that if I dye, all mine affaires and she may remaine to your trustie care, as being (by my selfe) absolutely commended to your providence, and so to dispose both of the one and other, as may best agree with the comfort of my soule. As for you (choice beauty) I humbly entreate, that after my death you would not forget me, to the end, I may make my vaunt in another world, that I was affected here by the fairest Lady that ever Nature framed. If of these two things you will give mee assurance, I shall depart from you with no meane comfort.

The friendly Merchant, and likewise the Ladie, hearing these words, wept both bitterly: and after hee had given over speaking, kindely they comforted him, with promises and solemne Vowes, that if hee dyed, all should be performed which hee had requested. Within a short while after, he departed out of this life, and they gave him verie honourable buriall, according to that Country custome. Which being done, the Merchant dispatching all his affaires at Rhodes, was desirous to returne home to Cyprus, in a Carracke of the Catelans then there being: mooving the Ladie in the matter, to understand how shee stoode enclined, because urgent occasions called him thence to Cyprus. The Lady made answere, that shee was willing to passe thither with him, hoping for the love hee bare to deceased Antiochus, that hee would respect her as his Sister. The Merchant was willing to give her any contentment, but yet resolved her, that under the title of being his Sister, it would be no warrant of securitie to them both. Wherefore, hee rather advised her, to stile him as her husband, and he would terme her his Wife, and so hee should be sure to defend her from all injuries whatsoever.

Being aboord the Carrack, they had a Cabine and small bed conveniently allowed them, where they slept together, that they might the better be reputed as man and wife; for, to passe otherwise, would have beene very dangerous to them both. And questionlesse, their faithfull promise made at Rhodes to Antiochus, sickenesse on the Sea, and mutuall respect they had of each others credit, was a constant restraint to all wanton desires, and a motive rather to incite Chastitie, then otherwise, and so (I hope) you are perswaded of them. But howsoever, the windes blewe merrily, the Carracke sayled lustily, and (by this time) they are arrived at Baffa, where the Cyprian Merchant dwelt, and where shee continued a long while with him, no one knowing otherwise, but that shee was his wife indeede.

Now it fortuned, that there arrived also at the same Baffa (about some especiall occasions of his) a Gentleman whose name was Antigonus, well stept into yeeres, and better stored with wisedome then wealth: because by medling in many matters, while hee followed the service of the King of Cyprus, Fortune had beene very adverse to him. This ancient Gentleman, passing (on a day) by the house where the Lady lay, and the Merchant being gone about his businesse into Armenia: hee chanced to see the Lady at a window of the house, and because shee was very beautifull, he observed her the more advisedly, recollecting his sences together, that (doubtlesse) he had seene her before, but in what place hee could not remember. The Lady her selfe likewise, who had so long time beene Fortunes tennis ball, and the terme of her many miseries drawing now neere an ending: began to conceive (upon the very first sight of Antigonus) that she had formerly seene him in Alexandria, serving her Father in place of great degree. Heereupon, a sodaine hope perswaded her, that by the advice and furtherance of this Gentleman, shee should recover her wonted Royall condition: and opportunity now aptly fitting her, by the absence of her pretended Merchant-husband, shee sent for him, requesting to have a few words with him.

When he was come into the house, she bashfully demanded of him, if he was not named Antigonus of Famagosta, because she knew one like him so called? He answered that he was so named: saying moreover, Madam me thinkes I should know you, but I cannot remember where I have seene you, wherefore I would entreat (if it might stand with your good liking) that my memory might be quickned with better knowledge of you. The Lady perceiving him to be the man indeed, weeping incessantly, she threw her armes about his necke, and soone after asked Antigonus (who stood as one confounded with mervaile) if he had never seene her in Alexandria? Upon these words, Antigonus knew her immediately to be Alathiella, daughter to the great Soldane, who was supposed (long since) to be drowned in the Sea: and offering to do her such reverence as became him, she would not permit him, but desired that he would bee assistant to her, and willed him also to sit downe awhile by her.

A goodly chaire being brought him, in very humble maner he demanded of her, what had become of her in so long a time, because it was verily beleeved throughout all Egypt, that she was drowned in the Sea. I would it had bin so, answered the Lady, rather then to leade such a life as I have done; and I thinke my Father himselfe would wish it so, if ever he should come to the knowledge thereof. With these words the teares rained downe her faire cheekes: wherefore Antigonus thus spake unto hir. Madam, discomfort not your selfe before you have occasion; but (if you be so pleased) relate your passed accidents to me, and what the course of your life hath bene: perhaps, I shall give you such friendly advice as may stand you insted, and no way be injurious to you.

Fetching a sighe, even as if her heart would have split in sunder, thus she replyed. Ah Antigonus, me thinkes when I looke on thee, I seeme to behold my royall Father, and therefore mooved with the like religious zeale and charitable love, as in duty I owe unto him: I wil make known to thee, what I rather ought to conceale and hide from any person living. I know thee to be honourable, discreete, and truely wise, though I am a fraile, simple, and weake woman, therefore I dare discover to thee, rather then any other that I know, by what strange and unexpected misfortunes I have lived so long obscurely in the world. And if in thy great and grave judgement (after the hearing of my many miseries) thou canst any way restore me to my former estate, I pray thee do it: but if thou perceive it impossible to be done, as earnestly likewise I entreate thee, never to reveale to any living person, that either thou hast seene mee, or heard any speech of me. After these words, the teares still streaming from her faire eyes, she recounted the whole passage of her rare mishappes, even from her shipwracke in the sea of Majorica, untill that very instant houre; speaking them in such harsh manner as they hapned, and not sparing any jot of them.

Antigonus being mooved to much compassion, declared how hee pitied her by his teares; and having bene silent an indifferent while, as considering in this case what was best to be done, thus he began. Madam, seeing you have past through such a multitude of misfortunes, yet undiscovered, what and who you are: I will render you as blamelesse to your Father, and estate you as fairely in his love, as at the houre when you parted from him, and afterward make you wife to the King of Colchos. Shee demanding of him, by what meanes possibly this could be accomplished, breefely he made it knowne to her, how, and in what manner he would performe it.

To cut off further tedious circumstances, forthwith he returned to Famagosta, and going before the King of the country, thus he spake to him. Sir, you may (if so you will be pleased) in an instant, do me an exceeding honor, who have bene impoverished by your service, and also a deed of great renowne to your selfe, without any much matter of expence and cost. The King demanding how? Antigonus thus answered. The faire daughter of the Soldane, so generally reported to be drowned, is arrived at Baffa, and to preserve her honor from blemishing, hath suffered many crosses and calamities: being at this instant in very poore estate, yet desirous to revisite her father. If you please to send her home under my conduct, it will be great honour to you, and no meane benefite to me: which kindnesse will for ever be thankfully remembred by the Soldan.

The King in royall magnificence, replied sodainly, that he was highly pleased with these good tydings; and having sent honorably for hir from Baffa, with great pompe she was conducted to Famagosta, and there most graciously welcommed both by the King and Queene, with solemne triumphes, bankets, and revelling, performed in most Majesticke manner. Being questioned by the King and Queene, concerning so large a time of strange misfortunes: according as Antigonus had formerly enstructed her, so did she shape the forme of her answers, and satisfied (with honor) all their demands. So, within few daies after, upon her earnest and instant request, with an honourable traine of Lords and Ladies, shee was sent thence, and conducted all the way by Antigonus, untill she came unto the Soldans Court.

After some few dayes of her reposing there, the Soldan was desirous to understand, how she could possibly live so long in any Kingdome or Province whatsoever, and yet no knowledge to be taken of her? The Lady, who perfectly retained by heart, and had all her lessons at her fingers ends, by the warie instruction which Antigonus had given her, answered her father in this manner. Sir, about the twentieth day after my departure from you, a very terrible and dreadfull tempest overtooke us, so that in dead time of the night, our ship being split in sunder upon the sands, neere to a place called Varna, what became of all the men that were aboord, I neither know, nor ever heard of. Onely I remember, then when death appeared, and I being recovered from death to life, certaine Pezants of the Countrey, comming to get what they could finde in the ship so wrackt, I was first (with two of my women) brought and set safely on the shore.

No sooner were we there, but certaine rude shagge-haird villaines set upon us, carrying away from me both my women, then haling me along by the haire of my head: neither teares or intercessions could draw any pitty from them. As thus they dragd me into a spacious Wood, foure horsemen on a sodaine came riding by, who seeing how dishonourably the villaines used me, rescued me from them, and forced them to flight. But the foure horsemen, seeming (in my judgement) to bee persons of power and authority, letting them go, came to me; urging sundry questions to me, which neither I understood, or they mine answeres. After many deliberations held among themselves, setting me upon one of their horses, they brought me to a Monasterie of religious women, according to the custome of their Law: and there, whatsoever they did or sayde, I know not, but I was most benignely welcommed thither, and honoured of them extraordinarily; where (with them in Devotion) I dedicated my selfe to the Goddesse of chastity, who is highly reverenced and regarded among the women of that Countrey, and to her religious service they are wholly addicted.

After I had continued some time among them, and learned a little of their language; they asked me, of whence, and what I was. Reason gave me so much understanding, to be fearefull of telling them the trueth, for feare of expulsion from among them, as an enemy to their Law and Religion: wherefore I answered (according as necessitie urged) that I was daughter to a Gentleman of Cyprus, who sent me to bee married in Candie; but our fortunes (meaning such as had the charge of me) fell out quite contrary to our expectation, by losses, shipwracke, and other mischances; adding many matters more beside, onely in regard of feare, and yeelding obediently to observe their customes.

At length, she that was in cheefest preheminence among these Women (whom they termed by the name of their Ladie Abbesse) demaunded of mee, whether I was willing to abide in that condition of life, or to returne home againe into Cyprus. I answerd, that I desired nothing more. But shee, being very carefull of mine honour, would never repose confidence in any that came for Cyprus, till two honest Gentlemen of France who hapned thither about two moneths since, accompanied with their wives, one of them being a neere kinswoman to the Lady Abbesse. And she well knowing, that they travelled in pilgrimage to Jerusalem, to visite the holy Sepulcher, where (as they beleeve) that he whom they held for their God was buried, after the Jewes had put him to death; recommended me to their loving trust, with especiall charge, for delivering mee to my Father in Cyprus. What honourable love and respect I found in the company of those Gentlemen and their Wives, during our voyage backe to Cyprus, the historie would be overtedious in reporting, neither is it much materiall to our purpose, because your demaund is to another end.

Sayling on prosperously in our Ship, it was not long before we arrived at Baffa, where being landed, and not knowing any person, neither what I should say to the Gentlemen, who onely were carefull for delivering me to my Father, according as they were charged by the reverend Abbesse: it was the will of heaven doubtlesse (in pitty and compassion of my passed disasters) that I was no sooner come on shore at Baffa, but I should there haply meet with Antigonus, whom I called unto in our Country language because I would not be understood by the Gentlemen nor their wives, requesting him to acknowledge me as his daughter. Quickly he apprehended mine intention, accomplishing what I requested, and (according to his poore power) most bounteously feasted the Gentlemen and their wives, conducting me to the King of Cyprus, who received me royally, and sent me home to you with so much honour, as I am no way able to relate. What else remaineth to be said, Antigonus who hath oft heard the whole story of my misfortunes, at better leysure will report.

Antigonus then turning to the Soldan, saide: My Lord, as shee hath often told me, and by relation both of the Gentlemen and their wives, she hath delivered nothing but truth. Onely shee hath forgotten somewhat worth the speaking, as thinking it not fit for her to utter, because indeed it is not so convenient for her. Namely, how much the Gentlemen and their wives (with whom she came) commended the rare honesty and integrity of life, as also the unspotted vertue wherein shee lived among those chaste religious women, as they constantly (both with teares and solemne protestations) avouched to me, when kindly they resigned their charge to me. Of all which matters, and many more beside, if I should make discourse to your Excellencie; this whole day, the night ensuing, and the next daies full extendure, are not sufficient to acquaint you withall. Let it suffice then that I have said so much, as (both by the reports, and mine owne understanding) may give you faithfull assurance, to make your Royall vaunt, of having the fairest, most vertuous, and honest Lady to your daughter, of any King or Prince whatsoever.

The Soldane was joyfull beyond all measure, welcomming both him and the rest in most stately manner, oftentimes entreating the Gods very heartily, that he might live to requite them with equall recompence, who had so graciously honored his daughter: but above all the rest, the King of Cyprus, who sent her home so Majestically. And having bestowne great gifts on Antigonus, within a few dayes after, hee gave him leave to returne to Cyprus: with thankfull favours to the King as well by Letters, as also by Ambassadours expressely sent, both from himselfe and his Daughter.

When as this businesse was fully finished, the Soldane, desiring to accomplish what formerly was intended and begun, namely, that she might be wife to the King of Colchos; hee gave him intelligence of all that had happened; writing moreover to him, that (if he were so pleased) he wold yet send her in Royall manner to him. The King of Colchos was exceeding joyfull of these glad tydings, and dispatching a worthy traine to fetch her, she was conveyed thither very pompously, and she who had bene imbraced by so many, was received by him as an honest Virgin, living long time after with him in much joy and felicity. And therefore it hath bene saide as a common Proverbe: The mouth well kist comes not short of good Fortune, but is still renewed like the Moone.

THE EIGHT NOVELL

WHEREBY ALL MEN MAY PLAINELY UNDERSTAND, THAT LOYALTY FAITHFULLY KEPT TO THE PRINCE (WHAT PERILS SOEVER DOE ENSUE) DOTH YET NEVERTHELESSE RENOWNE A MAN, AND BRING HIM TO FARRE GREATER HONOUR.

The *Count D'Angiers being falsly accused, was banished out of France, and left his two children in England in divers places. Returning afterward (unknowne) thorow Scotland, hee found them advanced unto great dignitie. Then, repayring in the habite of a Servitour, into the King of France his Armie, and his innocencie made publiquely knowne, hee was reseated in his former honourable degree.*

THE Ladies sighed verie often, hearing the variety of wofull miseries happening to Alathiella: but who knoweth, what occasion mooved them to those sighes? Perhappes there were some among them, who rather sighed they could not be so often maried as she was, rather then for any other compassion they had of her disasters. But leaving that to their owne construction, they smiled merrily at the last speeches of Pamphilus: and the Queene perceyving the Novell to be ended, shee fixed her eye upon Madame Eliza, as signifying thereby, that she was next to succeed in order; which shee joyfully embracing, spake as followeth. The field is very large and spacious, wherein all this day we have walked, and there is not any one here so wearied with running the former races, but nimbly would adventure on as many more, so copious are the alterations of Fortune, in sad repetition of her wonderfull changes: and among the infinity of her various courses, I must make addition of another, which I trust, will no way discontent you.

When the Romaine Empire was translated from the French to the Germaines, mighty dissentions grew betweene both the Nations, insomuch, that it drew a dismall and a lingering warre. In which respect, as well for the safety of his owne Kingdome, as to annoy and disturbe his enemies; the King of France and one of his sonnes, having congregated the forces of their owne Dominions, as also of their friends and confederates, they resolved manfully to encounter their enemies. But before they would adventure any rash proceeding, they held it as the cheefest part of policy and royall providence, not to leave the State without a Chiefe or Governour. And having had good experience of Gualtier, Count D'Angiers, to be a wise and worthy Lord, singularly expert in military discipline, and faithfull in all affaires of the Kingdome (yet fitter for ease and pleasure, then laborious toyle and travaile:) he was elected Lieutenant Governour in their sted, over the whole kingdom of France, and then they went on in their enterprize.

Now began the Count to execute the office committed to his trust, by orderly proceeding, and with great discretion, yet not entering into any businesse, without consent of the Queene and her faire daughter in Law: who although they were left under his care and custodie, yet (notwithstanding) he honoured them as his superiours, and as the dignity of their quality required. Here you are to observe, concerning Count Gualtier himselfe, that he was a most compleate person, aged litle above forty yeeres, as affable and singularly conditioned, as any Nobleman possibly could be, nor did those times affoord a Gentleman, that equalled him in all respects. It fortuned, that the King and his sonne being busy in the aforenamed war, the wife and Lady of Count Gualtier died in the mean while, leaving him onely a sonne and a daughter very yong, and of tender yeeres, which made his owne home the lesse welcom to him, having lost his deere Love, and second selfe.

Heereupon, he resorted to the Court of the said Ladies the more frequently, often conferring with them, about the waighty affaires of the Kingdome: in which time of so serious interparlance, the Kings sonnes wife, threw many affectionate regards upon him, convaying such conspiring passions to her heart (in regard of his person and vertues) that her love exceeded all capacity of governement. Her desires out-stepping al compasse of modesty, or the dignity of her Princely condition, throwes off all regard of civill and sober thoughts, and guides her into a Labyrinth of wanton imaginations. For, she regards not now the eminency of his high Authority, his gravity of yeares, and those parts that are the true conducts to honour: but lookes upon her owne loose and lascivious appetite, her young, gallant, and over-ready yeelding nature, comparing them with his want of a wife, and likely hope thereby of her sooner prevailing; supposing, that nothing could be her hindrance, but onely bashfull shamefastnesse, which she rather chose utterly to forsake and set aside, then to faile of her hot enflamed affection, and therefore she would needs be the discoverer of her owne disgrace.

Upon a day, being alone by her selfe, and the time seeming suteable to her intention: shee sent for the Count, under colour of some other important conference with him. The Count D'Angiers, whose thoughts were quite contrary to hers: immediately went to her, where they both sitting downe together on a beds side in her Chamber, according as formerly shee had plotted her purpose; twice hee demaunded of her, upon what occasion she had thus sent for him. She sitting a long while silent, as if she had no answere to make him, pressed by the violence of her amorous passions, a Vermillion tincture leaping up into her face, yet shame enforcing teares from her eyes, with words broken and halfe confused, at last she began to deliver her minde in this manner.

Honourable Lord, and my deerely respected Friend, being so wise a man as you are, it is no difficult matter for you to know, what a frayle condition is imposed both on men and women; yet (for divers occasions) much more upon the one, then the other. Wherefore desertfully, in the censure of a just and upright Judge, a fault of divers conditions (in respect of the person) ought not to bee censured with one and the same punnishment. Beside, who will not say, that a man or woman of poore and meane estate, having no other helpe for maintainance, but laborious travaile of their bodies, should worthily receive more sharpe reprehension, in yeelding to amorous desires, or such passions as are incited by love; then a wealthy Lady whose living relieth not on her pains or cares, neither wanteth any thing that she can wish to have: I dare presume, that you your selfe will allow this to be equall and just. In which respect, I am of the minde, that the fore-named allegations, ought to serve as a sufficient excuse, yea, and to the advantage of her who is so possessed, if the passions of love should over-reach her: alwayes provided, that shee can pleade in her owne defence, the choice of a wise and vertuous friend, answerable to her owne condition and quality, and no way to be taxt with a servile or vile election.

These two speciall observations, allowable in my judgement, and living now in mee, seizing on my youthfull blood and yeeres, have found no mean inducement to love, in regard of my husbands far distance from me, medling in the rude uncivill actions of warre, when he should rather be at home in more sweet imployment. You see Sir, that these Oratours advance themselves here in your presence, to acquaint you with the extremity of my over-commanding agony: and if the same power hath dominion in you, which your discretion (questionlesse) cannot be voide of; then let me entreate such advice from you, as may rather helpe, then hinder my hopes. Beleeve it then for trueth Sir, that the long absence of my husband from me, the solitary condition wherein I am left, il agreeing with the hot blood running in my veines, and the temper of my earnest desires: have so prevailed against my strongest resistances, that not onely so weake a woman as I am, but any man of much more potent might, (living in ease and idlenesse as I do) cannot withstand such continuall assaults, having no other helpe then flesh and blood.

Nor am I so ignorant, but publike knowledge of such an error in mee, would be reputed a shrewd taxation of honesty: whereas (on the other side) secret carriage, and heedfull managing such amorous affaires, may passe for currant without any reproach. And let me tel you, noble Count, that I repute love highly favourable to mee, by guiding my judgement with such moderation, to make election of a wise, worthy, and honorable friend, fit to enjoy the grace of a farre greater Lady then I am, and the first letter of his name, is the Count D'Angiers. For if error have not misled mine eye, as in love no Lady can be easily deceived: for person, perfections, and all parts most to bee commended in a man, the whole Realme of France containeth not your equall. Observe beside, how forward Fortune sheweth her selfe to us both in this case; you to bee destitute of a wife, as I am of an husband; for I account him as dead to me, when he denies me the duties belonging to a wife. Wherefore, in regard of the unfained affection I beare you, and compassion which you ought to have of a Royall Princesse, even almost sicke to death for your sake, I earnestly entreat you, not to deny mee your loving society, but pittying my youth and fiery affections (never to be quenched but by your kindnesse) I may enjoy my hearts desire.

As shee uttered these words, the teares streamed aboundantly downe her faire cheekes, preventing her of any further speech: so that dejecting her head into her bosome, overcome with the predominance of her passions, she fell upon the Counts knee, whereas else shee had falne uppon the ground. When he, like a loyall and most honourable man, sharpely reprehended her fond and idle love: And when shee would have embraced him about the necke to have kissed him; he repulsed her roughly from him, protesting upon his honourable reputation, that rather then hee would so wrong his Lord and Maister, he would endure a thousand deaths.

The Ladie seeing her desire disappointed, and her fond expectation utterly frustrated: grew instantly forgetfull of her intemperate love, and falling into extremity of rage, converted her former gentle and loving speeches, into this harsh and ruder language. Villaine (quoth she) shall the longing comforts of my life, be abridged by thy base and scornefull deniall? Shall my destruction be wrought by thy most currish unkindenesse, and all my hoped joyes be defeated in a moment? Know Slave, that I did not so earnestly desire thy sweete embracements before, but now as deadly I hate and despise them; which either thy death or banishment shall deerely pay for. No sooner had she thus spoken, but tearing her haire, and renting her garments in peeces, she ranne about like a distracted Woman, crying out alowd; Helpe, helpe, the Count D'Angiers will forcibly dishonour mee, the lustfull Count will violate mine honour.

D'Angiers seeing this, and fearing more the malice of the over-credulous Court, then either his owne Conscience, or any dishonourable act by him committed, beleeving likewise, that her slanderous accusation would be credited, above his true and spotlesse innocency: closely he conveyed himselfe out of the Court, making what hast he could, home to his owne house, which being too weake for warranting his safety upon such pursuite as would be used against him, without any further advice or counsell, he seated his two children on horsebacke, himselfe also being but meanly mounted, thus away thence he went to Calice.

Upon the clamour and noise of the Lady, the Courtiers quickly flocked thither; and, as lies soone winne beleefe in hasty opinions, upon any silly or shallow surmise: so did her accusation passe for currant, and the Counts advancement being envied by many, made his honest carriage (in this case) the more suspected. In hast and madding fury, they ran to the Counts houses, to arrest his person, and carry him to prison: but when they could not finde him, they raced his goodly buildings downe to the ground, and used all shamefull violence to them. Now, as ill newes sildome wants a speedy Messenger; so, in lesse space then you will imagine, the King and Dolphin heard thereof in the Campe, and were therewith so highly offended, that the Count had a sodaine and severe condemnation, all his progeny being sentenced with perpetuall exile, and promises of great and bountifull rewards, to such as could bring his body alive or dead.

Thus the innocent Count, by his overhasty and sodaine flight, made himselfe guilty of this foule imputation: and arriving at Callice with his children, their poore and homely habites, hid them from being knowne, and thence they crossed over into England, staying no where untill hee came to London. Before he would enter into the City, he gave divers good advertisements to his children, but especially two precepts above all the rest. First, with patient soules to support the poore condition, whereto Fortune (without any offence in him or them) had thus dejected them. Next, that they should have most heedfull care, at no time to disclose from whence they came, or whose children they were, because it extended to the perill of their lives. His Sonne, being named Lewes, and now about nine yeares old, his Daughter called Violenta, and aged seaven yeares, did both observe their fathers direction, as afterward it did sufficiently appeare. And because they might live in the safer securitie, hee thought it for the best to change their names, calling his Sonne Perotto, and his Daughter Gianetta, for thus they might best escape unknowne.

Being entred into the City, and in the poore estate of beggars, they craved every bodies mercy and almes. It came to passe, that standing one morning at the Cathedrall Church doore, a great Lady of England being then wife to the Lord high Marshal, comming forth of the Church, espied the Count and his children there begging. Of him she demanded what Countrey-man he was? and whether those children were his owne, or no? The Count replyed, that he was borne in Piccardy, and for an unhappy fact committed by his eldest Sonne (a stripling of more hopefull expectation, then proved) hee was enforced, with those his two other children, to forsake his country. The Lady being by nature very pittifull, looking advisedly on the young Girle beganne to grow in good liking of her; because (indeede) she was amiable, gentle, and beautifull, whereupon shee saide. Honest man, thy daughter hath a pleasing countenance, and (perhaps) her inward disposition may proove answerable to her outward good parts: if therefore thou canst bee content to leave her with me, I will give her entertainment, and upon her dutifull carriage and behaviour, if she live to such yeares as may require it, I will have her honestly bestowne in marriage. This motion was very pleasing to the Count, who readily declared his willing consent thereto, and with the teares trickling downe his cheekes, in thankfull maner he delivered his pretty daughter to the Lady.

She being thus happily bestowne, he minded to tarry no longer in London; but, in his wonted begging manner, travailing thorough the Country with his sonne Perotto, at length he came into Wales: but not without much weary paine and travell, being never used before, to journey so far on foot. There dwelt another Lord, in office of Marshalship to the King of England, whose power extended over those parts: a man of very great authority, keeping a most noble and bountifull house, which they termed the President of Wales his Court; whereto the Count and his Son oftentimes resorted, as finding there good releefe and comfort. On a day, one of the Presidents sons, accompanied with divers other Gentlemens children, were performing certaine youthfull sports, and pastimes, as running, leaping, and such like, wherein Perotto presumed to make one among them, excelling all the rest in such commendable manner, as none of them came any thing nere him. Divers times the President had taken notice thereof, and was so well pleased with the Lads behaviour, that he enquired of whence he was? Answere was made, that he was a poore mans Son, that every day came for an almes to his gate.

The President being desirous to make the boy his, the Count (whose dayly prayers were to the same purpose) frankly gave his Son to the Nobleman: albeit naturall and fatherly affection, urged some unwillingnesse to part so with him; yet necessity and discretion, found it best for the benefit of them both. Being thus eased of care for his Son and Daughter, and they (though in different places) yet under good and worthy government; the Count would continue no longer in England: but, as best hee could procure the meanes, passed over into Ireland, and being arrived at a place called Stanford, became servant to an Earle of that Country, a Gentleman professing Armes, on whom he attended as a serving man, and lived a long while in that estate very painfully.

His daughter Violenta, clouded under the borrowed name of Gianetta, dwelling with the Lady at London, grew so in yeares, beauty, comelinesse of person, and was so gracefull in the favour of her Lord and Lady, yea, of every one in the house beside, that it was wonderfull to behold. Such as but observed her usuall carriage, and what modesty shined cleerely in her eyes, reputed her well worthy of honourable preferment; in regard, the Lady that had received her of her Father, not knowing of whence, or what shee was; but as himselfe had made report, intended to match her in honourable marriage, according as her vertues worthily deserved. But God, the just rewarder of all good endeavours, knowing her to be noble by birth, and (causelesse) to suffer for the sinnes of another; disposed otherwise of her: and that so worthy a Virgin might be no mate for a man of ill conditions, no doubt ordained what was to be done, according to his owne good pleasure.

The Noble Lady, with whom poore Gianetta dwelt, had but one onely Sonne by her Husband, and he most deerely affected of them both, as well in regard he was to be their heire, as also for his vertues and commendable qualities, wherein he excelled many young Gentlemen. Endued he was with heroycall valour, compleate in all perfections of person, and his minde every way answerable to his outward behaviour, exceeding Gianetta about sixe yeeres in age. Hee perceiving her to be a faire and comely Maiden, grew to affect her so entirely, that all things else he held contemptible, and nothing pleasing in his eye but shee. Now, in regard her parentage was reputed poore, he kept his love concealed from his Parents, not daring to desire her in marriage: for loath he was to loose their favour, by disclosing the vehemency of his afflictions, which proved a greater torment to him, then if it had beene openly knowne.

It came to passe, that love over-awed him in such sort, as he fell into a violent sicknesse, and store of Physicions were sent for, to save him from death, if possibly it might be. Their judgements observing the course of his sicknesse, yet not reaching to the cause of the disease, made a doubtfull question of his recovery; which was so displeasing to his parents, that their griefe and sorrow grew beyond measure. Many earnest entreaties they moved to him, to know the occasion of his sickenesse, whereto he returned no other answere, but heart-breaking sighes, and incessant teares, which drew him more and more into weakenesse of body.

It chanced on a day, a Physicion was brought unto him, being young in yeeres, but well experienced in his practise: and as hee made triall of his pulse, Gianetta (who by his Mothers command, attended on him very diligently) upon some especiall occasion entred into the Chamber, which when the young Gentleman perceived, and that shee neither spake word, nor so much as looked towards him, his heart grew great in amorous desire, and his pulse did beate beyond the compasse of ordinary custome; whereof the Physicion made good observation, to note how long that fit would continue. No sooner was Gianetta gone forth of the Chamber, but the pulse immediately gave over beating, which perswaded the Physicion, that some part of the disease had now discovered it selfe apparantly.

Within a while after, pretending to have some speech with Gianetta, and holding the Gentleman still by the arme, the Physicion caused her to be sent for; and immediately shee came. Upon her very entrance into the Chamber, the pulse began to beate againe extreamely, and when shee departed, it presently ceased. Now was he thorowly perswaded, that he had found the true effect of his sicknesse, when taking the Father and mother aside, thus he spake to them. If you be desirous of your Sons health, it consisteth not either in Physicion or physicke, but in the mercy of your faire Maide Gianetta; for manifest signes have made it knowne to me, and he loveth the Damosell very dearely: yet (for ought I can perceive, the Maide doth not know it:) now if you have respect of his life, you know (in this case) what is to be done. The Nobleman and his Wife hearing this, became somewhat satisfied, because there remained a remedy to preserve his life: but yet it was no meane griefe to them, if it should so succeede, as they feared, namely, the marriage betweene this their Sonne and Gianetta.

The Physicion being gone, and they repairing to their sicke Sonne, the Mother began with him in this manner. Sonne, I was alwayes perswaded, that thou wouldest not conceale any secret from me, or the least part of thy desires; especially, when without enjoying them, thou must remaine in the danger of death. Full well art thou assured, or in reason oughtest to be, that there is not any thing for thy contentment, be it of what quality soever, but it should have beene provided for thee, and in as ample manner as for mine owne selfe. But though thou hast wandred so farre from duty, and hazarded both thy life and ours, it commeth so to passe, that Heaven hath beene more mercifull to thee, then thou wouldest be to thy selfe, or us. And to prevent thy dying of this disease, a dreame this night hath acquainted me with the principall occasion of thy sickenesse, to wit, extraordinary affection to a young Maiden, in some such place as thou hast seene her. I tell thee Sonne, it is a matter of no disgrace to love, and why shouldst thou shame to manifest as much, it being so apt and convenient for thy youth? For if I were perswaded, that thou couldst not love, I should make the lesse esteeme of thee. Therefore deare Sonne, be not dismayed, but freely discover thine affections. Expell those disastrous drouping thoughts, that have indangered thy life by this long lingering sicknesse. And let thy soule be faithfully assured, that thou canst not require any thing to be done, remaining within the compasse of my power, but I will performe it; for I love thee as dearely as mine owne life. Set therefore aside this nice conceit of shame and feare, revealing the truth boldly to me, if I may stead thee in thy love; resolving thy selfe unfaignedly, that if my care stretch not to compasse thy content, account me for the most cruell Mother living, and utterly unworthy of such a Sonne.

The young Gentleman having heard these protestations made by his Mother, was not a little ashamed of his owne follie; but recollecting his better thoughts together, and knowing in his soule, that no one could better further his hopes, then shee; forgetting all his former feare, he returned her this answere; Madam, and my dearely affected Mother, nothing hath more occasioned my loves so strict concealement, but an especiall errour, which I finde by daily proofe in many, who being growne to yeeres of grave discretion, doe never remember, that they themselves have bin yong. But because herein I find you to be both discreet and wise, I will not onely affirme what you have seen in me to be true, but also will confesse, to whom it is: upon condition, that the effect of your promise may follow it, according to the power remaining in you, whereby you onely may secure my life.

His Mother, desirous to bee resolved, whether his confession would agree with the Physitians words, or no, and reserving another intention to her selfe: bad him feare nothing, but freely discover his whole desire, and forthwith she doubted not to effect it. Then Madame (quoth hee) the matchlesse beauty, and commendable qualities of your Maid Gianetta, to whom (as yet) I have made no motion, to commiserate this my languishing extremity, nor acquainted any living creature with my love: the concealing of these afflictions to myselfe, hath brought mee to this desperate condition: and if some meane bee not wrought, according to your constant promise, for the full enjoying of my longing desires, assure your selfe (most Noble Mother) that the date of my life is very short.

The Lady well knowing, that the time now rather required kindest comfort, then any severe or sharpe reprehension, smiling on him, said: Alas deere sonne, wast thou sicke for this? Be of good cheare, and when thy strength is better restored, then referre the matter to me. The young Gentleman, being put in good hope by his Mothers promise, began (in short time) to shew apparant signes of well-forwarded amendment, to the Mothers great joy and comfort, disposing her selfe dayly to proove, how in honor she might keepe promise with her sonne.

Within a short while after, calling Gianetta privately to her, in gentle manner, and by the way of pleasant discourse, she demanded of hir, whither she was provided of a Lover, or no. Gianetta, being never acquainted with any such questions, a scarlet Dye covering all her modest countenance, thus replyed. Madam, I have no neede of any Lover, and very unseemely were it, for so poore a Damosell as I am, to have so much as a thought of Lovers, being banished from my friends and kinsfolke, and remaining in service as I do.

If you have none (answered the Ladie) wee will bestow one on you, which shall content your minde, and bring you to a more pleasing kinde of life; because it is farre unfit, that so faire a Maid as you are, should remaine destitute of a Lover. Madam, said Gianetta, considering with my selfe, that since you received me of my poore Father, you have used me rather like your daughter, then a servant; it becommeth mee to doe as pleaseth you. Notwithstanding, I trust (in the regard of mine owne good and honour) never to use any complaint in such a case: but if you please to bestow a husband on me, I purpose to love and honor him onely, and not any other. For, of all the inheritance left me by my progenitors, nothing remaineth to me but honourable honesty, and that shall be my Legacie so long as I live.

These wordes, were of a quite contrary complexion, to those which the Lady expected from her, and for effecting the promise made unto hir Sonne: howbeit (like a wise and noble Ladie) much she inwardly commended the maids answers, and said unto her. But tell me Gianetta, what if my Lord the King (who is a gallant youthfull Prince, and you so bright a beautie as you are) should take pleasure in your love, would ye denie him? Sodainly the Maide returned this answer: Madame, the King perhaps might enforce me, but with my free consent, hee shall never have any thing of me that is not honest. Nor did the Lady dislike her Maides courage and resolution, but breaking off all her further conference, intended shortly to put her project in proofe, saying to her son, that when he was fully recovered, he should have private accesse to Gianetta, whom shee doubted not but would be tractable enough to him; for she helde it no meane blemish to her honour, to moove the Maide any more in the matter, but let him compasse it as he could.

Farre from the yong Gentlemans humour was this answer of his Mother, because he aimed not at any dishonourable end: true, faithfull, and honest love was the sole scope of his intention, foule and loathsome lust he utterly defied; whereupon he fell into sickenesse againe, rather more violently then before. Which the Lady perceiving, revealed her whole intent to Gianetta, and finding her constancie beyond common comparison, acquainted her Lord with all she had done, and both consented (though much against their mindes) to let him enjoy her in honourable marriage: accounting it better, for preservation of their onely sons life, to match him farre inferiour to his degree, then by denying his desire, to let him pine and dye for her love.

After great consultation with Kindred and Friends, the match was agreed upon, to the no little joy of Gianetta, who devoutly returned infinite thankes to heaven, for so mercifully respecting her dejected poore estate, after the bitter passage of so many miseries, and never tearming her selfe any otherwise, but the daughter of a poore Piccard. Soone was the yong Gentleman recovered and married, no man alive so well contented as he, and setting downe an absolute determination, to lead a loving life with his Gianetta.

Let us now convert our lookes to Wales, to Perotto; being lefte there with the other Lord Marshall, who was the President of that Countrey. On hee grew in yeeres, choisely respected by his Lord, because hee was most comely of person, and forward to all valiant attempts: so that in Tourneyes, Joustes, and other actions of Armes, his like was not to bee found in all the Island, being named onely Perotto the valiant Piccard, and so was he famed farre and neere. As God had not forgotten his Sister, so in mercy he became as mindefull of him; for, a contagious mortalitie hapning in the Country, the greater part of the people perished thereby, the rest flying thence into other partes of the Land, whereby the whole Province became dispeopled and desolate.

In the time of this plague and dreadful visitation, the Lord President, his Lady, Sonnes, Daughters, Brothers, Nephewes, and Kindred dyed, none remaining alive, but one onely Daughter marriageable, a few of the houshold servants, beside Perotto, whom (after the sickenesse was more mildly asswaged) with counsell and consent of the Countrey people, the young Lady accepted to be her husband, because hee was a man so worthy and valiant; and of all the inheritance left by her deceased Father, she made him Lord, and sole commander. Within no long while after, the King of England understanding that his President of Wales was dead, and Fame liberally relating the vertues, valour, and good parts of Perotto the Piccard, hee created him President thereof, and to supply the place of his deceased Lord. These faire fortunes, within the compasse of so short a time, fell to the two innocent children of the Count D'Angiers after they were left by him as lost and forlorne.

Eighteene yeeres were now fully overpast, since the Count D'Angiers fled from Paris, having suffered (in miserable sort) many hard and lamentable adversities; and seeing himselfe now to be growne aged, hee was desirous to leave Ireland, and to know (if hee might) what was become of both his Children. Heereupon, perceiving his wonted forme to be so altered, that such as formerly had conversed most with him, could now not take any knowledge of him, and feeling his body (through long labour and exercise endured in service) more lustie then in his idle youthfull yeeres, especially when he left the Court of France, hee purposed to proceede in his determination. Being verie poore and simple in apparrel, he departed from the Irish Earle his Master, with whom he had continued long in service, to no advantage or advancement, and crossing over into England, travayled to the place in Wales, where he left Perotto, and where he found him to be Lord Marshall and President of the country, lusty and in good health, a man of goodly feature, and most honorably respected and reverenced of the people.

Well may you imagine, that this was no small comfort to the poore aged Countes heart, yet would he not make himselfe knowne to him, or any other about him, but referred his joy to a further enlarging and diminishing, by sight of the other limbe of his life, his deerely affected daughter Gianetta, denying rest to his bodie in any place, until such time as he came to London. Making there secret enquiry concerning the Ladie with whom hee had left his daughter; hee understoode, that a young Gentlewoman, named Gianetta, was married to that Ladies onely Son, which made a second addition of joy to his soule, accounting all his passed adversities of no valew, both his children being living, and in so high honour.

Having found her dwelling, and (like a kinde Father) being earnestly desirous to see her; he dayly resorted nere to the house, where Sir Roger Mandevile (for so was Gianettaes husband named) chauncing to see him, being moved to compassion, because he was both poore and aged: commaunded one of his men, to take him into the house, and to give him some foode for Gods sake, which (accordingly) the servant performed. Gianetta had divers children by her husband, the eldest being but eight yeeres of age, yet all of them so faire and comely as could be. As the old Count sate eating his meate in the Hall, the children came all about him, embracing, hugging, and making much of him, even as if Nature had truly instructed them, that this was their aged (though poor) Grandfather, and hee as lovingly receiving these kinde relations from them, wisely and silently kept all to himselfe, with sighes, teares, and joyes intermixed together. Insomuch that the children would not part from him though their Tutor and Master called them often, which being tolde to their Mother, shee came foorth of the neere adjoyning Parlour, and threatned to beate them, if they would not doe what their Maister commanded them.

Then the Children began to cry, saying; that they would tarrie stil by the good olde man, because he loved them better then their Master did; whereat both the Lady and the Count began to smile. The Count, like a poore Begger, and not as Father to so great a Lady, arose, and did her humble reverence, because she was now a Noble Woman, conceyving wonderfull joy in his soule, to see her so faire and goodly a creature: yet could she take no knowledge of him, Age, want, and misery had so mightily altered him; his head all white, his beard without any comly forme, his Garments so poore, and his face so wrinkled, leane and meager, that he seemed rather some Carter, then a Count. And Gianetta perceiving that when her Children were fetcht away, they returned againe to the olde man, and would not leave him, she desired their Maister to let them alone.

While thus the Children continued making much of the good olde man, Lord Andrew Mandevile, Father to Sir Roger, came into the Hall, as being so willed to doe by the Childrens Schoolemaster. He being a hastie-minded man, and one that ever despised Gianetta before, but much more since her marriage to his sonne, angerly said; Let them alone with a mischeefe, and so befall them, their best company ought to bee with beggers, for so they are bred and borne by the Mothers side: and therefore it is no mervaile, if like will to like, a beggers brats to keepe company with beggers. The Count hearing these contemptible wordes, was not a little greeved thereat; and although his courage was greater then his poore condition would permit him to expresse; yet, clouding all injuries with noble patience, hanging downe his head, and shedding many a salt teare, endured this reproach, as hee had done many, both before and after.

But honourable Sir Roger, perceiving what delight his Children tooke in the poore mans company; albeit he was offended at his Fathers harsh words, by holding his wife in such base respect: yet favoured the poore Count so much the more, and seeing him weepe, did greatly compassionate his case, saying to the poore man, that if he would accept of his service, he willingly would entertaine him. Whereto the Count replyed, that very gladly he would embrace his kinde offer: but he was capeable of no other service, save onely to be an horse-keeper, wherein he had imployed the most part of his time. Heereupon, more for pleasure and pitty then any necessity of his service, he was appointed to the keeping of an Horse, which was onely for his Daughters saddle, and daily after he had done his diligence about the Horse, he did nothing else but play with the children. While Fortune pleased thus to dally with the poore Count D'Angiers, and his children, it came to passe, that the King of France (after divers leagues of truces passed betweene him and the Germaines) died, and next after him, his Son the Dolphin was crowned King, and it was his wife that wrongfully caused the Counts banishment. After expiration of the last league with the Germains, the warres began to grow much more fierce and sharpe, and the King of England, (upon request made to him by his new brother of France) sent him very honourable supplies of his people, under the conduct of Perotto, his lately elected President of Wales, and Sir Roger Mandevile, Son to his other Lord high Marshall; with whom also the poore Count went, and continued a long while in the Campe as a common Souldier, where yet like a valiant Gentleman (as indeed he was no lesse) both in advice and actions; he accomplished many more notable matters, then was expected to come from him.

It so fell out, that in the continuance of this warre, the Queene of France fell into a grievous sicknesse, and perceiving her selfe to be at the point of death, shee became very penitently sorrowfull for all her sinnes, earnestly desiring that shee might be confessed by the Archbishop of Roane, who was reputed to be an holy and vertuous man. In the repetition of her other offences; she revealed what great wrong she had done to the Count D'Angiers, resting not so satisfied, with disclosing the whole matter to him alone; but also confessed the same before many other worthy persons, and of great honour, entreating them to worke so with the King, that (if the Count were yet living, or any of his Children) they might be restored to their former honour againe.

It was not long after, but the Queene left this life, and was most royally enterred, when her confession being disclosed to the King, after much sorrow for so injuriously wronging a man of so great valour and honour: Proclamation was made throughout the Campe, and in many other parts of France beside, that whosoever could produce the Count D'Angiers, or any of his Children, should richly be rewarded for each one of them; in regard he was innocent of the foule imputation, by the Queenes owne confession, and for his wrongfull exile so long, he should be exalted to his former honour with farre greater favours, which the King franckely would bestow upon him. When the Count (who walked up and downe in the habite of a common servitor) heard this Proclamation, forth-with hee went to his Master Sir Roger Mandevile, requesting his speedy repaire to Lord Perotto, that being both assembled together, he would acquaint them with a serious matter, concerning the late Proclamation published by the King. Being by themselves alone in the Tent, the Count spake in this manner to Perotto. Sir, S. Roger Mandevile here, your equall competitor in this military service, is the husband to your naturall sister, having as yet never received any dowry with her, but her inherent unblemishable vertue and honor. Now because she may not stil remain destitute of a competent Dowry: I desire that Sir Roger, and none other, may enjoy the royall reward promised by the King. You Lord Perotto, whose true name is Lewes, manifest your selfe to be nobly borne, and Sonne to the wrongfull banished Count D'Angiers: avouch moreover, that Violenta, shadowed under the borrowed name of Gianetta, is your owne Sister; and deliver me up as your Father, the long exiled Count D'Angiers. Perotto hearing this, beheld him more advisedly, and began to know him: then, the tears flowing abundantly from his eyes, he fell at his feete, and often embracing him, saide: My deere and noble Father! a thousand times more deerely welcome to your Sonne Lewes.

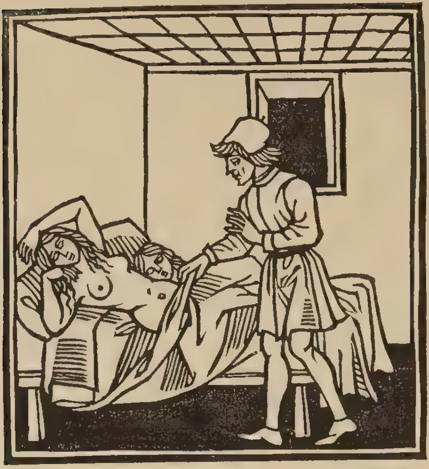
Sir Roger Mandevile, hearing first what the Count had saide, and seeing what Perotto afterward performed; became surprized with such extraordinary joy and admiration, that he knew not how to carry himselfe in this case. Neverthelesse, giving credite to his words, and being somewhat ashamed, that he had not used the Count in more respective manner, and remembring beside, the unkinde language of his furious Father to him: he kneeled downe, humbly craving pardon, both for his Fathers rudenes and his owne, which was courteously granted by the Cóunt, embracing him lovingly in his armes.

When they had a while discoursed their severall fortunes, sometime in teares, and then againe in joy; Perotto and Sir Roger, would have the Count to be garmented in better manner, but in no wise he would suffer it; for it was his onely desire, that Sir Roger should bee assured of the promised reward, by presenting him in the Kings presence, and in the homely habit which he did weare, to touch him with the more sensible shame, for his rash beleefe, and injurious proceeding. Then Sir Roger Mandevile, guiding the Count by the hand, and Perotto following after, came before the King, offering to present the Count and his children, if the reward promised in the Proclamation might be performed. The King immediately commanded, that a reward of inestimable valew should be produced; desiring Sir Roger upon the sight thereof, to make good his offer, for forthwith presenting the Count and his children. Which hee made no longer delay of, but turning himselfe about, delivered the aged Count, by the title of his servant, and presenting Perotto next, saide. Sir, heere I deliver you the Father and his Son, his Daughter who is my wife, cannot so conveniently be here now, but shortly, by the permission of heaven, your Majesty shall have a sight of her.

When the King heard this, stedfastly he looked on the Count; and, notwithstanding his wonderfull alteration, both from his wonted feature and forme: yet, after he had very seriously viewed him, he knew him perfectly; and the teares trickling downe his cheekes, partly with remorsefull shame, and joy also for his so happy recovery, he tooke up the Count from kneeling, kissing, and embracing him very kindely, welcomming Perotto in the selfe same manner. Immediately also he gave commaund, that the Count should be restored to his honors, apparell, servants, horses, and furniture, answerable to his high estate and calling, which was as speedily performed. Moreover, the King greatly honoured Sir Roger Mandevile, desiring to be made acquainted with all their passed fortunes.

When Sir Roger had received the royall reward, for thus surrendering the Count and his Sonne, the Count calling him to him, saide. Take that Princely remuneration of my soveraigne Lord and King, and commending me to your unkinde Father, tell him that your Children are no beggars brats, neither basely borne by their Mothers side. Sir Roger returning home with his bountifull reward, soone after brought his Wife and Mother to Paris, and so did Perotto his Wife, where in great joy and triumph, they continued a long while with the noble Count; who had all his goods and honours restored to him, in farre greater measure then ever they were before: his Sonnes in Law returning home with their Wives into England, left the Count with the King at Paris, where he spent the rest of his dayes in great honour and felicity.

THE NINTH NOVELL



WHEREIN IS DECLARED, THAT BY OVERLIBERALL COMMENDING THE CHASTITY OF WOMEN, IT FALLETH OUT (OFTENTIMES) TO BE VERY DANGEROUS, ESPECIALLY BY THE MEANES OF TREACHERERS WHO YET (IN THE ENDE) ARE JUSTLY PUNNISHED FOR THEIR TREACHERY.

BERNARDO, *a Merchant of Geneway, being deceived by another Merchant, named Ambroginolo, lost a great part of his goods. And commanding his innocent Wife to be murthered, she escaped, and (in the habite of a man) became servant to the Soldane. The deceiver being found at last, shee compassed such meanes, that her Husband Bernardo came into Alexandria, and there, after due punnishment inflicted on the false deceiver, she resumed the garments againe of a woman, and returned home with her Husband to Geneway.*

MADAM Eliza having ended her compassionate discourse, which indeede had moved all the rest to sighing; the Queene, who was faire, comely of stature, and carrying a very majesticall countenance, smiling more familarly then the other, spake to them thus. It is very necessary, that the promise made to Dioneus, should carefully be kept, and because now there remaineth none, to report any more Novels, but onely he and my selfe: I must first deliver mine, and he (who takes it for an honour) to be the last in relating his owne, last let him be for his owne deliverance. Then pausing a little while, thus she began againe. Many times among vulgar people, it hath passed as a common Proverbe: That the deceiver is often trampled on, by such as he hath deceived. And this cannot shew it selfe (by any reason) to be true, except such accidents as awaite on treachery, doe really make a just discovery thereof. And therefore according to the course of this day observed, I am the woman that must make good what I have saide for the approbation of that Proverbe: no way (I hope) distastfull to you in the hearing, but advantageable to preserve you from any such beguiling.

There was a faire and goodly Inne in Paris, much frequented by many great Italian Merchants, according to such variety of occasions and businesse, as urged their often resorting thither. One night among many other, having had a merry Supper together, they began to discourse on divers matters, and falling from one relation to another; they communed in very friendly manner, concerning their wives, lefte at home in their houses. Quoth the first, I cannot well imagine what my wife is now doing, but I am able to say for my selfe, that if a pretty female should fall into my company: I could easily forget my love to my wife, and make use of such an advantage offered.

A second replyed; And trust me, I should do no lesse, because I am perswaded, that if my wife be willing to wander, the law is in her owne hand, and I am farre enough from home: dumbe walles blab no tales, and offences unknowne are sildome or never called in question. A third man unapt in censure, with his former fellowes of the Jury; and it plainely appeared, that all the rest were of the same opinion, condemning their wives over-rashly, and alledging, that when husbands strayed so far from home, their wives had wit enough to make use of their time.

Onely one man among them all, named Bernardo Lomellino, and dwelling in Geneway, maintained the contrary; boldly avouching, that by the especiall favour of Fortune, he had a wife so perfectly compleate in all graces and vertues, as any Lady in the world possibly could be, and that Italy scarsely contained her equall. But, she was goodly of person, and yet very young, quicke, quaint, milde, and courteous, and not any thing appertaining to the office of a wife, either for domesticke affayres, or any other imployment whatsoever, but in womanhoode shee went beyond all other. No Lord, Knight, Esquire, or Gentleman, could bee better served at his Table, then himselfe dayly was, with more wisedome, modesty and discretion. After all this, hee praised her for riding, hawking, hunting, fishing, fowling, reading, writing, enditing, and most absolute keeping his Bookes of accounts, that neither himselfe, or any other Merchant could therein excell her. After infinite other commendations, he came to the former point of their argument, concerning the easie falling of women into wantonnesse, maintaining (with a solemne oath) that no woman possibly could be more chaste and honest then she: in which respect, he was verily perswaded, that if he stayed from her ten years space (yea all his life time) out of his house; yet never would shee falsifie her faith to him, or be lewdly allured by any other man.

Amongst these Merchants thus communing together, there was a young proper man, named Ambroginolo of Placentia, who began to laugh at the last prayses which Bernardo had used of his Wife, and seeming to make a mockerie thereof, demaunded, if the Emperour had given him this priviledge, above all other married men? Bernardo being somewhat offended, answered: No Emperour hath done it, but the especiall blessing of heaven, exceeding all the Emperours on the earth in grace, and thereby have received this favour; whereto Ambroginolo presently thus replyed. Bernardo, without all question to the contrary, I beleeve that what thou hast said, is true; but (for ought I can perceive) thou hast slender judgement in the Nature of things: because, if thou diddst observe them well, thou couldst not be of so grosse understanding. For, by comprehending matters in their true kinde and nature, thou wouldst speake of them more correctly then thou doest. And to the end, thou mayest not imagine, that we who have spoken of our Wives, doe thinke any otherwise of them, then as well and honestly as thou canst of thine, nor that any thing else did urge these speeches of them, or falling into this kinde of discourse, but onely by a naturall instinct and admonition, I wil proceede familiarly, a little further with thee, upon the matter alreadie propounded.

I have evermore understoode, that man was the most noble creature, formed by God to live in this World, and woman in the next degree to him: but man, as generally is beleeved, and as is discerned by apparant effects is the most perfect of both. Having then the most perfection in him, without all doubt, he must be so much the more firme and constant. So in like manner, it hath beene, and is universally graunted, that Woman is more various and mutable, and the reason thereof may be approved by many naturall circumstances, which were needlesse now to make any mention of. If a man then be possessed of the greater stability, and yet cannot containe himselfe from condiscending, I say not to one that entreates him, but to desire any other that may please him; and beside, to covet the enjoying of his owne pleasing contentment (a thing not chancing to him once in a moneth, but infinite times in a dayes space). What can you then conceive of a fraile Woman, subject (by nature) to entreaties, flatteries, giftes, perswasions, and a thousand other inticing meanes, which a man (that is affected to her) can use? Doest thou thinke then that she hath any power to containe? Assuredly, though thou shouldest rest so resolved, yet cannot I be of the same opinion. For I am sure thou beleevest, and must needes confesse it, that thy wife is a Woman, made of flesh and blood, as other women are: if it be so, she cannot bee without the same desires, and the weaknesse or strength as other women have, to resist naturall appetites as her owne are. In regard whereof, it is meerely impossible (although she be most honest) but she must needs doe that which other Women doe: for there is nothing else possible, either to be denied or affirmed to the contrary, as thou most unadvisedly hast done.

Bernardo answered in this manner. I am a Merchant, and no Philosopher, and like a Merchant I meane to answer thee. I am not to learne, that these accidents by thee related, may happen to fooles, who are voide of understanding or shame: but such as are wise, and endued with vertue, have alwayes such a precious esteeme of their honour, that they wil containe those principles of constancie, which men are meerely carelesse of, and I justifie my wife to be one of them. Beleeve me Bernardo, replyed Ambroginolo, if so often as thy wives minde is addicted to wanton folly, a badge of scorne should arise on thy forehead, to render testimony of hir female frailty, I beleeve the number of them would be more, then willingly you would wish them to be. And among all married men in every degree, the notes are so secret of their wives imperfections, that the sharpest sight is not able to discerne them: and the wiser sort of men are willing not to know them; because shame and losse of honour is never imposed, but in cases evident and apparant.

Perswade thy selfe then Bernardo, that what women may accomplish in secret, they will rarely faile to doe: or if they abstaine, it is through feare and folly. Wherefore, hold it for a certaine rule, that that woman is onely chaste, that never was solicited personally, or if she endured any such suite, either shee answered yea, or no. And albeit I know this to be true, by many infallible and naturall reasons, yet could I not speak so exactly as I doe, if I had not tried experimentally, the humours and affections of divers Women. Yea, and let me tell thee more Bernardo, were I in private company with thy wife, howsoever thou presumest to thinke her to be, I should account it a matter of no impossibility, to finde in her the selfesame frailty.

Bernardoes blood now began to boyle, and patience being a little put downe by choller, thus he replyed. A combat of words requires over-long continuance; for I maintaine the matter which thou deniest, and all this sorts to nothing in the end. But seeing thou presumest, that all women are so apt and tractable, and thy selfe so confident of thine owne power: I willingly yeeld (for the better assurance of my wifes constant loyalty) to have my head smitten off, if thou canst winne her to any such dishonest act, by any meanes whatsoever thou canst use unto her; which if thou canst not doe, thou shalt onely loose a thousand duckets of Gold. Now began Ambroginolo to be heated with these words, answering thus. Bernardo, if I had won the wager, I know not what I should doe with thy head; but if thou be willing to stand upon the proofe, pawne downe five thousand Duckets of gold, (a matter of much lesse value then thy head) against a thousand Duckets of mine, granting me a lawfull limited time, which I require to be no more then the space of three moneths, after the day of my departing hence. I will stand bound to goe for Geneway, and there winne such kinde consent of thy Wife, as shall be to mine owne content. In witnesse whereof, I will bring backe with me such private and especiall tokens, as thou thy selfe shalt confesse that I have not failed. Provided, that thou doe first promise upon thy faith, to absent thy selfe thence during my limitted time, and be no hinderance to me by thy Letters, concerning the attempt by me undertaken.

Bernardo saide, Be it a bargaine, I am the man that will make good my five thousand Duckets; and albeit the other Merchants then present, earnestly laboured to breake the wager, knowing great harme must needs ensue thereon: yet both the parties were so hot and fiery, as all the other men spake to no effect, but writings was made, sealed, and delivered under either of their hands, Bernardo remaining at Paris, and Ambroginolo departing for Geneway. There he remained some few dayes, to learne the streetes name where Bernardo dwelt, as also the conditions and qualities of his Wife, which scarcely pleased him when he heard them; because they were farre beyond her Husbands relation, and shee reputed to be the onely wonder of women; whereby he plainely perceived, that he had undertaken a very idle enterprise, yet would he not give it over so, but proceeded therein a little further.

He wrought such meanes, that he came acquainted with a poore woman, who often frequented Bernardoes house, and was greatly in favour with his wife; upon whose poverty he so prevailed, by earnest perswasions, but much more by large gifts of money, that he won her to further him in this manner following. A faire and artificiall Chest he caused to be purposely made, wherein himselfe might be aptly contained, and so conveyed into the House of Bernardoes Wife, under colour of a formall excuse; that the poore woman should be absent from the City two or three dayes, and shee must keepe it safe till she returne. The Gentlewoman suspecting no guile, but that the Chest was the receptacle of all the womans wealth; would trust it in no other roome, then her owne Bed-chamber, which was the place where Ambroginolo most desired to bee.

Being thus conveyed into the Chamber, the night going on apace, and the Gentlewoman fast asleepe in her bed, a lighted Taper stood burning on the Table by her, as in her Husbands absence shee ever used to have: Ambroginolo softly opened the Chest, according as cunningly hee had contrived it, and stepping forth in his sockes made of cloath, observed the scituation of the Chamber, the paintings, pictures, and beautifull hangings, with all things else that were remarkable, which perfectly he committed to his memory. Going neere to the bed, he saw her lie there sweetly sleeping, and her young Daughter in like manner by her, she seeming then as compleate and pleasing a creature, as when shee was attired in her best bravery. No especiall note or marke could hee descrie, whereof he might make credible report, but onely a small wart upon her left pappe, with some few haires growing thereon, appearing to be as yellow as gold.

Sufficient had he seene, and durst presume no further; but taking one of her Rings, which lay upon the Table, a purse of hers, hanging by on the wall, a light wearing Robe of silke, and her girdle, all which he put into the Chest; and being in himselfe, closed it fast as it was before, so continuing there in the Chamber two severall nights, the Gentlewoman neither mistrusting or missing any thing. The third day being come, the poore woman, according as formerly was concluded, came to have home her Chest againe, and brought it safely into her owne house; where Ambroginolo comming forth of it, satisfied the poore woman to her owne liking, returning (with all the forenamed things) so fast as conveniently he could to Paris.

Being arrived there long before his limmitted time, he called the Merchants together, who were present at the passed words and wager; avouching before Bernardo, that he had won his five thousand Duckets, and performed the taske he undertooke. To make good his protestation, first he described the forme of the Chamber, the curious pictures hanging about it, in what manner the bed stood, and every circumstance else beside. Next he shewed the severall things, which he brought away thence with him, affirming that he had received them of her selfe. Bernardo confessed, that his description of the Chamber was true, and acknowledged moreover, that these other things did belong to his Wife: But (quoth he) this may be gotten, by corrupting some servant of mine, both for intelligence of the Chamber, as also of the Ring, Purse, and what else is beside; all which suffice not to win the wager, without some other more apparant and pregnant token. In troth, answered Ambroginolo, me thinkes these should serve for sufficient proofes; but seeing thou art so desirous to know more: I plainely tell thee, that faire Genevra thy Wife, hath a small round wart upon her left pappe, and some few little golden haires growing thereon.

When Bernardo heard these words, they were as so many stabs to his heart, yea, beyond all compasse of patient sufferance, and by the changing of his colour, it was noted manifestly, (being unable to utter one word) that Ambroginolo had spoken nothing but the truth. Within a while after, he saide; Gentlemen, that which Ambroginolo hath saide, is very true, wherefore let him come when he will, and he shall be paide; which accordingly he performed on the very next day, even to the utmost penny, departing then from Paris towards Geneway, with a most malitious intention to his Wife: Being come neere to the City, he would not enter it, but rode to a Country house of his, standing about tenne miles distant thence. Being there arrived, he called a servant, in whom hee reposed especiall trust, sending him to Geneway with two Horses, writing to his Wife, that he was returned, and shee should come thither to see him. But secretly he charged his servant, that so soone as he had brought her to a convenient place, he should there kill her, without any pitty or compassion, and then returne to him againe.

When the servant was come to Geneway, and had delivered his Letter and message, Genevra gave him most joyfull welcome, and on the morrow morning mounting on Horse-backe with the servant, rode merrily towards the Country house; divers things shee discoursed on by the way, till they descended into a deepe solitary valey, very thickly beset with high and huge spreading Trees, which the servant supposed to be a meete place, for the execution of his Masters command. Suddenly drawing forth his Sword, and holding Genevra fast by the arme, he saide; Mistresse, quickly commend your soule to God, for you must die, before you passe any further. Genevra seeing the naked Sword, and hearing the words so peremptorily delivered, fearefully answered; Alas deare friend, mercy for Gods sake; and before thou kill me, tell me wherein I have offended thee, and why thou must kill me? Alas good Mistresse replied the servant, you have not any way offended me, but in what occasion you have displeased your Husband, it is utterly unknowne to me: for he hath strictly commanded me, without respect of pitty or compassion, to kill you by the way as I bring you, and if I doe it not, he hath sworne to hang me by the necke. You know good Mistresse, how much I stand obliged to him, and how impossible it is for me, to contradict any thing that he commandeth. God is my witnesse, that I am truly compassionate of you, and yet (by no meanes) may I let you live.

Genevra kneeling before him weeping, wringing her hands, thus replyed. Wilt thou turne Monster, and be a murtherer of her that never wronged thee, to please another man, and on a bare command? God, who truly knoweth all things, is my faithfull witnesse, that I never committed any offence, whereby to deserve the dislike of my Husband, much lesse so harsh a recompence as this is. But flying from mine owne justification, and appealing to thy manly mercy, thou mayest (wert thou but so well pleased) in a moment satisfie both thy Master and me, in such manner as I will make plaine and apparant to thee. Take thou my garments, spare me onely thy doublet, and such a Bonnet as is fitting for a man, so returne with my habite to thy Master, assuring him, that the deede is done. And here I sweare to thee, by that life which I enjoy but by thy mercy, I will so strangely disguise my selfe, and wander so far off from these Countries, as neither he or thou, nor any person belonging to these parts, shall ever heare any tydings of me.

The servant, who had no great good will to kill her, very easily grew pittifull, tooke off her upper garments, and gave her a poore ragged doublet, a sillie Chapperone, and such small store of money as he had, desiring her to forsake that Country, and so left her to walke on foote out of the valley. When he came to his Maister, and had delivered him her garments, he assured him, that he had not onely accomplished his commaund, but also was most secure from any discovery: because he had no sooner done the deede, but foure or five very ravenous Woolves, came presently running to the dead bodie, and gave it buriall in their bellyes. Bernardo soone after returning to Geneway, was much blamed for such unkinde cruelty to his wife; but his constant avouching of her treason to him (according then to the Countries custome) did cleare him from all pursuite of Law.

Poor Genevra was left thus alone and disconsolate, and night stealing fast upon her, shee went to a silly village neere adjoyning, where (by the meanes of a good olde woman) she got such provision as the place afforded, making the doublet fit to her body, and converting her petticoate to a paire of breeches, according to the Mariners fashion: then cutting her haire, and quaintly disguised like unto a Saylor, she went to the Sea coast. By good fortune, she met there with a Gentleman of Cathalogna, whose name was Signior Enchararcho, who came on land from his Ship, which lay hulling there about Albagia, to refresh himselfe at a pleasant Spring. Enchararcho taking her to be a man, as shee appeared no otherwise by her habite; upon some conference passing betweene them, shee was entertayned into his service, and being brought aboord the Ship, she went under the name of Sicurano da Finale. There shee had better apparrell bestowne on her by the Gentleman, and her service proved so pleasing and acceptable to him, that hee liked her care and diligence beyond all comparison.

It came to passe within a short while after, that this Gentleman of Cathalogna sayled (with some charge of his) into Alexandria, carrying thither certaine Faulcons, which he presented to the Soldan, who oftentimes welcommed this Gentleman to his table, where he observed the behaviour of Sicurano, attending on his Maisters Trencher, and therewith was so highly pleased; that hee requested to have him from the Gentleman, who (for his more advancement) willingly parted with his so lately entertained servant. Sicurano was so ready and discreet in his daily services, that he grew in as great grace with the Soldan, as before hee had done with Enchararcho.

At a certaine season in the yeare, as customary order (there observed) had formerly beene, in the City of Acres which was under the Soldanes subjection, there yeerely met a great assembly of Merchants, as

Christians, Moores, Jewes, Sarazens, and many other Nations besides, as at a common Mart or Fayre. And to the end, that the Merchants (for the better sale of their goods) might be there in the safer assurance, the Soldane used to send thither some of his ordinarie Officers, and a strong guard of Souldiers beside, to defend them from all injuries and molestation, because he reaped thereby no meane benefit. And who should be now sent about this businesse, but his new elected favourite Sicurano, because she was skilfull and perfect in the Languages.

Sicurano being come to Acres, as Lord and Captaine of the Guard for the Merchants, and for the safety of their Merchandizes, she discharged her office most commendably, walking with her traine thorough every part of the Fayre, where she observed a worthy company of Merchants, Sicilians, Pisans, Genewayes, Venetians, and other Italians, whom the more willingly she noted, in remembrance of her native Country. At one especiall time among other, chancing into a Shop or Booth belonging to the Venetians, she espied (hanging up with other costly wares) a Purse and a Girdle, which sodainly she remembred to be sometime her owne; whereat she was not a little abashed in her minde. But without making any such outward shew, courteously she requested to know whose they were, and whether they should be sold, or no.

Ambroginolo of Placentia, was likewise come thither, and great store of Merchandizes hee had brought with him, in a Carracke appertaining to the Venetians, and hee hearing the Captaine of the Guard demaund whose they were, stepped foorth before him, and smiling, answered: That they were his, but not to be solde; yet if hee liked them, gladly he would bestow them on him. Sicurano seeing him smile, suspected least himselfe had (by some unfitting behaviour) beene the occasion thereof: and therefore, with a more setled countenance, hee said: Perhaps thou smilest, because I that am a man, professing Armes, should question after such womanish toyes. Ambroginolo replyed, My Lord, pardon mee, I smile not at you, or at your demaund, but at the manner how I came by these things.

Sicurano, upon this answere, was ten times more desirous then before, and saide: If Fortune favoured thee in friendly maner, by the obtaining of these things: if it may be spoken, tell mee how thou hadst them. My Lord (answered Ambroginolo) these things (with many more besides) were given me by a Gentlewoman of Geneway, named Madam Genevra, the wife to one Bernardo Lomellino, in recompence of one nights lodging with her, and she desired me to keepe them for her sake. Now, the maine reason of my smiling, was the remembrance of her husbands folly, in waging five thousand Duckets of Gold, against one thousand of mine, that I should not obtaine my will of his Wife; which I did, and thereby won the wager. But hee, who better deserved to be punished for his folly, then shee, who was but sicke of all womens disease; returning from Paris to Geneway, caused her to be slaine, as afterward it was reported by himselfe.

When Sicurano heard this horrible lye, immediately shee conceived, that this was the occasion of her husbands hatred to her, and all the hard haps which she had since suffered: whereupon, shee reputed it for more then a mortall sinne, if such a villaine should passe without due punishment. Sicurano seemed to like well this report, and grew into such familiarity with Ambroginolo, that (by her perswasions) when the Fayre was ended, she tooke him higher with her into Alexandria, and all his Wares along with him, furnishing him with a fit and convenient shop, where he made great benefite of his Merchandizes, trusting all his monies in the Captaines custody, because it was the safest course for him, and so hee continued there with no meane contentment.

Much did shee pitty her Husbands perplexity, devising by what good and warrantable meanes she might make knowne her innocency to him; wherein her place and authority did greatly sted her, and she wrought with divers gallant Merchants of Geneway that then remained in Alexandria, and by vertue of the Soldans friendly letters beside, to bring him thither upon an especiall occasion. Come he did, albeit in poore and meane order, which soone was better altered by her appointment, and he verie honourably (though in private) entertained by divers of her woorthie friends, till time did favour what she further intended.

In the expectation of Bernardoes arrivall, shee had so prevayled with Ambroginolo, that the same tale which he formerly told to her, he delivered againe in presence of the Soldan, who seemed to be wel pleased with it. But after shee had once seene her Husband, shee thought upon her more serious businesse; providing her selfe of an apt opportunity, when shee entreated such favour of the Soldan, that both the men might bee brought before him; where if Ambroginolo would not confesse (without constraint) that which he had made his vaunt of concerning Bernardoes wife, he might be compelled thereto perforce.

Sicuranoes word was a Law with the Soldane, so that Ambroginolo and Bernardo being brought face to face, the Soldane with a sterne and angry countenance, in the presence of a most Princely Assembly, commanded Ambroginolo to declare the truth, upon perill of his life, by what meanes he won the Wager of the five thousand Golden Duckets he received of Bernardo. Ambroginolo seeing Sicurano there present, upon whose favour he wholly relyed, yet perceiving her lookes likewise to be as dreadful as the Soldans, and hearing her threaten him with most greevous torments except he revealed the truth indeed; you may easily guesse in what condition he stood at that instant.

Frownes and fury he beheld on either side, and Bernardo standing before him, with a world of famous witnesses, to heare his lye confounded by his owne confession, and his tongue to denie what it had before so constantly avouched. Yet dreaming on no other pain or penalty, but restoring backe the five thousand Duckets of gold, and the other things by him purloyned, truly he revealed the whole forme of his falshood. Then Sicurano according as the Soldane had formerly commanded him, turning to Bernardo, saide. And thou, upon the suggestion of this foule lye, what didst thou to thy Wife? Being (quoth Bernardo) overcome with rage, for the losse of my money, and the dishonor I supposed to receive by my Wife; I caused a servant of mine to kill her, and as hee credibly avouched, her body was devoured by ravenous Wolves in a moment after.

These things being thus spoken and heard, in the presence of the Soldan, and no reason (as yet) made knowne, why the case was so seriously urged, and to what end it would succeede: Sicurano spake in this manner to the Soldane. My gracious Lord, you may plainly perceive, in what degree that poore Gentlewoman might make her vaunt, beeing so well provided, both of a loving friend, and a husband. Such was the friends love, that in an instant, and by a wicked lye, hee robbed her both of her renowne and honour, and bereft her also of her husband. And her husband, rather crediting anothers falshoode, then the invincible trueth, whereof he had faithfull knowledge, by long and very honorable experience; caused her to be slaine, and made foode for devouring Wolves. Beside all this, such was the good will and affection borne to that Woman both by friend and husband, that the longest continuer of them in her company, makes them alike in knowledge of her. But because your great wisedom knoweth perfectly what each of them have worthily deserved: if you please (in your ever-knowne gracious benignity) to permit the punishment of the deceiver, and pardon the partie so deceyved; I will procure such meanes, that she shall appeare here in your presence, and theirs.

The Soldane, being desirous to give Sicurano all manner of satisfaction, having followed the course so industriously, bad him to produce the Woman, and hee was well contented. Whereat Bernardo stoode much amazed, because he verily beleeved that she was dead. And Ambroginolo foreseeing already a preparation for punishment, feared, that the repayment of the money would not now serve his turne: not knowing also, what he should further hope or suspect, if the woman her selfe did personally appeare, which hee imagined would be a miracle. Sicurano having thus obtained the Soldanes permission, in teares, humbling her selfe at his feete, in a moment she lost her manly voyce and demeanour, as knowing that she was now no longer to use them, but must truly witnesse what she was indeed, and therefore thus spake.

Great Soldane, I am the miserable and unfortunate Genevra, that for the space of sixe whole yeeres, have wandered through the world, in the habite of a man, falsely and most maliciously slaundered, by this villainous Traytor Ambroginolo, and by this unkinde cruell husband, betraied to his servant to be slaine, and left to be devoured by savage beasts. Afterward, desiring such garments as better fitted for her, and shewing her breasts, she made it apparant before the Soldane and his assistants, that shee was the very same woman indeede. Then turning her selfe to Ambroginolo, with more then manly courage, she demanded of him, when, and where it was, that he lay with her, as (villainously) he was not ashamed to make his vaunt? But hee, having alreadie acknowledged the contrarie, being stricken dumbe with shamefull disgrace, was not able to utter one word.

The Soldane, who had alwayes reputed Sicurano to be a man, having heard and seene so admirable an accident; was so amazed in his minde, that many times he was very doubtfull, whether this was a dreame, or an absolute relation of trueth. But, after hee had more seriously considered thereon, and found it to be reall and infallible: with extraordinary gracious praises, he commended the life, constancy, condition and vertues of Genevra, whom (til that time) he had alwayes called Sicurano. So committing her to the company of honourable Ladies, to be changed from her manly habite; he pardoned Bernardo her husband (according to her request formerly made) although hee had more justly deserved death: which likewise himselfe confessed, and falling at the feet of Genevra, desired her (in teares) to forgive his rash transgression, which most lovingly she did, kissing and embracing him a thousand times.

Then the Soldane strictly commaunded, that on some high and eminent place of the Citie, Ambroginolo should be bound and impaled on a stake, having his naked body nointed all over with hony, and never to bee taken off, untill (of it selfe) it fell in peeces, which, according to the sentence, was presently performed. Next, he gave expresse charge, that all his mony and goods should be given to Genevra, which valued above ten thousand double Duckets. Forthwith a solemne Feast was prepared, wherein much honor was done to Bernardo, being the husband of Genevra: and to her, as to a most worthy woman, and matchlesse wife, he gave in costly Jewels, as also vessels of gold and silver plate, so much as did amount to above ten thousand double Duckets more.

When the feasting was finished, he caused a Ship to be furnished for them, graunting them license to depart from

Geneway when they pleased; whither they returned most richly and joyfully, being welcomed home with great honour, especially Madam Genevra, whom every one supposed to be dead; and alwayes after, so long as she lived, shee was most famous for her manifold vertues. But as for Ambroginolo, the verie same day that hee was impaled on the stake, annointed with honey, and fixed in the place appointed, to his no meane torment: he not onely died, but likewise was devoured to the bare bones, by Flies, Waspes, and Hornets, whereof the Countrey notoriously aboundeth. And his bones, in full forme and fashion, remained strangely blacke for a long time after, knit together by the sinewes; as a witnesse to many thousands of people, which afterward beheld the Carkasse of his wickednesse against so good and vertuous a Woman, that had not so much as a thought of any evill towards him. And thus was the Proverbe truly verified, that shame succeedeth after ugly sinne, and the deceiver is trampled and trod, by such as himselfe hath deceived.

THE TENTH NOVELL

WHEREIN OLDE MEN ARE WITTILY REPREHENDED, THAT WILL MATCH THEMSELVES WITH YOUNGER WOMEN THEN IS FIT FOR THEIR YEERES, AND INSUFFICIENT, NEVER CONSIDERING WHAT MAY HAPPEN TO THEM.

PAGAMINO *da Monaco, a roving Pyrate on the Seas, carried away the fayre Wife of Signior Ricciardo de Chinzica, who understanding where shee was, went thither; and falling into friendship with Pagamino, demanded his Wife of him; whereto he yeelded, provided, that shee would willingly goe away with him. She denied to part thence with her Husband, and Signior Ricciardo dying, she became the wife of Pagamino.*

EVERY one in this honest and gracious assembly, most highly commended the Novell re-counted by the Queene: but especially Dioneus, who remained to finish that dayes pleasure with his owne Discourse, and after many praises of the former tale were past, thus he began. Faire Ladies, part of the Queenes Novell hath made an alteration of my minde, from that which I intended to proceede next withall, and therfore I will report another. I cannot forget the unmanly indiscretion of Bernardo, but much more the base arrogance of Ambroginolo, how justly deserved shame fell upon him, as well it may happen to all other, that are so vile in their owne opinions, as he apparantly approved himselfe to be. For, as men wander abroad in the world, according to their occasions in diversity of Countries and observations of the peoples behaviour; so are their humours as variously transported. And if they finde women wantonly disposed abroade, the like judgement they give of their Wives at home; as if they had never knowne their birth and breeding, or made proofe of their loyall carriage towards them. Wherefore, the Tale that I purpose to relate, will likewise condemne all the like kind of men, but more especially such as thinke themselves endued with more strength then Nature meant to bestow on them, foolishly beleeving, that they can cover their owne defects by fabulous demonstrations, and thinking to fashion other of their owne complexions, that are meerely strangers to such grosse follies.

Know then, that there lived in Pisa (some hundred yeeres before Tuscany and Liguria embraced the Christian faith) a Judge better stored with wisedome and ingenuity, then corporall abilities of the body, named Signior Ricciardo di Cinzica. He being more then halfe perswaded, that hee could content a woman with such satisfaction as hee daily bestowed on his studies, being a widdower, and extraordinary wealthy, laboured with no meane paines, to enjoy a faire and youthfull wife in marriage: both which qualities hee should much rather have avoyded, if he could have ministred as good counsell to himselfe, as he did to others, resorting to him for advice. Upon this his amorous and diligent inquisition, it came so to passe, that a worthy Gentlewoman, called Bertolomea, one of the fairest and choisest yong maids in Pisa, whose youth did hardly agree with his age; but muck was the motive of this mariage, and no expectation of mutuall contentment. The Judge being married, and the Bride brought solemnly home to his house, we need make no question of brave cheare and banquetting, well furnished by their friends on either side: other matters were now hammering in the Judges head, for thogh he could please all his Clients with counsel, yet now such a suit was commenced against himselfe, and in Beauties Court of continuall requests, that the Judge failing in plea for his own defence, was often nonsuited by lack of answer; yet he wanted not good wines, drugs, and all sorts of restoratives to comfort the heart, and encrease good blood: but all availed not.

But well fare a good courage, where performance faileth, hee could liberally commend his passed joviall daies, and make a promise of as faire felicities yet to come; because his youth would renew it selfe like to the Eagle, and his vigour in as full force as before. But beside all these ydle allegations, he would needs instruct his wife in an Almanacke or Kalender, which he had (formerly) bought at Ravenna, and wherein he plainely shewed her, that there was not one day in the yeere, but it was dedicated to some Saint or other. In reverence of whom, and for their sakes, he approved by divers arguments and reasons, that a man and his wife ought to abstaine from bedding together. Adding withall, that those Saints dayes had their Fasts and Feasts, beside the foure seasons of the yeer, the vigils of the Apostles, and a thousand other holy dayes, with Fridayes, Saterdayes, and Sundayes, in honor of our Lords rest, and al the holy time of Lent; as also certain observations of the Moone, and infinit other exceptions beside; thinking perhaps, that it was as convenient for men to refraine from their wives conversation, as he did often time from sitting in the Court. These were his dayly documents to his young wife, wherewith (poore soule) she became so tyred, as nothing could be more irksom to her, and very careful he was, lest any other should teach her what belonged to working daies, because he would have her know none but holy daies. It came to passe, that the season waxing extremely hot, Signior Ricciardo would go to recreate himselfe at his house in the country, neere to the blacke Mountaine, where for his faire wives more contentment, he continued divers daies together. And for her further recreation, he gave order to have a day of fishing, he going aboord a small Pinnace among the Fishers, and she in another, consorted with divers other Gentlewomen, in whose company she was very well pleased. Delight made them launch further into the Sea, then either the Judge was willing they should have done, or agreed with their owne safety. For sodainly a Galliot came upon them, wherein was one Pagamino a famous Pyrate, who espying the two Pinnaces, made presently to them, and seized on that wherein the women were. When he beheld there so faire a young Woman, he coveted after no other purchase; but mounting her into his Galliot, in the sight of Signior Ricciardo, who by this time was fearefully landed, he carried her away with him. When Signior Judge had seene this theft (he being so jealous of his wife, as scarsely he would let the ayre breathe on her) it were needlesse to know whether he was offended, or no. He made complaint at Pisa, and in other places beside, what injurie he had sustained by those Pyrates, in carrying away his wife from him: but all in vaine, he neither (as yet) knew the man, nor what was become of him. Pagamino perceiving what a beautifull woman shee was, made the more precious esteeme of his purchase, and being himselfe a Batchelor, intended to keepe her as his owne, comforting her with kinde and pleasing speeches, not using any ill demeanor to her, because she wept and lamented greevously. But when night came, her husbands Kalender falling from her girdle, and all the fasts and feasts quite out of her remembrance, she received such curtesies from Pagamino, that before they could arrive at Monaco, the Judge and his Law cases were almost out of memory; such was his affable behaviour to her, and she began to converse with him in more friendly manner, and he entreated her as honourably, as if she had bin his espoused wife.

Within a short while after, report had acquainted the Judge, where and how his wife was kept from him; whereupon hee determined, not to send, but rather to go himselfe in person, and to redeeme her from the Pyrate, with what summes of money he should demand. By sea he passed to Monaco, where he saw his wife, and she him, as (soone after) shee made known to Pagamino. The next morning, Signior Ricciardo meeting with Pagamino, made meanes to be acquainted with him, and within lesse then an houres space, they grew into familiar conference; Pagamino yet pretending not to know him, but expected what issue this talke would sort to. When time served, the Judge discoursed the occasion of his comming thither, desiring him to demand what ransome he pleased, and that he might have his wife home with him. Whereto Pagamino answered.

My Lord Judge, you are welcome hither, and to answer you breefely very true it is, that I have a yong Gentlewoman in my house, whom I neither know to be your wife, or any other mans else whatsoever: for I am ignorant both of you and her, albeit she hath remained a while here with me. If you be her husband, as you seeme to avouch, I will bring her to you, for you appeare to be a worthy Gentleman, and (questionlesse) she cannot chuse but know you perfectly. If she do confirme that which you have saide, and be willing to depart hence with you: I shal rest well satisfied, and will have no other recompence for her ransome (in regard of your grave and reverend yeeres) but what your selfe shall please to give me. But if it fall out other then you have affirmed, you shal offer me great wrong, in seeking to get her from me; because I am a young man, and can as well maintaine so faire a wife as you, or any man else that I know. Beleeve it certainly, replyed the Judge, that she is my wife, and if you please to bring me where she is, you shall soone perceive it: for she will presently cast her armes about my necke, and I durst adventure the utter losse of her, if she deny to do it in your presence. Come on then, saide Pagamino, and let us delay the time no longer.

When they were entred into Pagaminos house, and sat downe in the Hall, he caused her to be called, and she (being readily prepared for the purpose), came forth of her Chamber before them both, where friendly they sate conversing together; never uttering any word unto Signieur Ricciardo, or knowing him from any other stranger, that Pagamino might bring into the house with him. Which when my Lord the Judge beheld, (who expected to finde a farre more gracious welcome) he stoode as a man amazed, saying to himselfe. Perhaps the extraordinary greefe and melancholly suffered by me since the time of her losse, hath so altred my wonted complexion, that shee is not able to take knowledge of me. Wherefore, going neerer to her, he saide: Faire Love, deerely have I bought your going on fishing, because never man felt the like afflictions as I have done since the day when I lost you: but by this your uncivil silence, you seeme as if you did not know me. Why deerest love, seest thou not that I am thy husband Ricciardo, who am come to pay what ransome this Gentleman shall demaund, even in the house where now we are, so to convey thee home againe, upon his kind promise of thy deliverance, after the payment of thy ransome?

Bertolomea turning towards him, and seeming as if shee smiled to her selfe, thus answered. Sir, speake you to me? Advise your selfe well, least you mistake me for some other, for mine owne part, I never saw you till now. How now quoth Ricciardo? Consider better what you say, looke more circumspectly on me, and then you will remember, that I am your loving husband, and my name is Ricciardo di Cinzica. You must pardon me Sir, replyed Bertolomea, I know it not so fitting for a modest woman to stand gazing in the faces of men: and let me looke uppon you never so often, certaine I am, that (till this instant) I have not seene you. My Lord Judge conceived in his minde, that thus she denied all knowledge of him, as standing in feare of Pagamino, and would not confesse him in his presence. Wherefore hee entreated of Pagamino, to affoord him so much favour, that he might speake alone with her in her Chamber. Pagamino answered, that he was well contented therewith, provided, that he should not kisse her against her will. Then he requested Bartolomea, to goe with him alone into her Chamber, there to heare what he could say, and to answere him as shee found occasion. When they were come into the Chamber, and none there present but he and shee, Signior Ricciardo began in this manner. Heart of my heart, life of my life, the sweetest hope that I have in this world; wilt thou not know thine owne Ricciardo, who loveth thee more then he doth himselfe? Why art thou so strange? Am I so disfigured, that thou knowest me not? Behold me with a more pleasing eye, I pray thee.

Bartolomea smiled to her selfe, and without suffering him to proceed any further in speech, returned him this answere. I would have you to understand Sir, that my memory is not so oblivious, but I know you to be Signior Ricciardo di Cinzica, and my husband by name or title, but during the time that I was with you, it very ill appeared that you had any knowledge of me. For if you had bene so wise and considerate, as (in your own judgement) the world reputed you to be, you could not be voide of so much apprehension, but did apparantly perceive, that I was yong, fresh, and cheerefully disposed; and so (by consequent) meet to know matters requisite for such young women, beside allowance of food and garments, though bashfulnesse and modesty forbid to utter it. But if studying the Lawes were more welcome to you then a wife, you ought not to have maried, and you loose the worthy reputation of a Judge, when you fall from that venerable profession, and make your selfe a common proclaimer of feasts and fasting dayes, lenten seasons, vigils, and solemnities due to Saints, which prohibite the houshold conversation of husbands and wives.

Here am I now with a worthy Gentleman, that entertaineth me with very honourable respect, and here I live in this Chamber, not so much as hearing of any feasts or fasting dayes; for, neither Fridaies, Saturdaies, vigils of Saints, or any lingering Lent, enter at this doore: but heere is honest and civill conversation, better agreeing with a youthfull disposition, then those harsh documents wherewith you tutord me. Wherefore my purpose is to continue here with him, as being a place sutable to my minde and youth, referring feasts, vigils, and fasting daies, to a more mature and stayed time of age, when the body is better able to endure them, and the mind may be prepared for such ghostly meditations: depart therefore at your owne pleasure, and make much of your Calender, without enjoying any company of mine, for you heare my resolved determination.

The Judge hearing these words, was overcome with exceeding griefe, and when she was silent, thus he began. Alas deare Love, what an answere is this? Hast thou no regard of thine owne honor, thy Parents, and friends? Canst thou rather affect to abide here, for the pleasures of this man, and so sin capitolly, then to live at Pisa in the state of my wife? Consider deare heart, when this man shall waxe weary of thee, to thy shame and his owne disgrace, he will reject thee. I must and shall love thee for ever, and when I dye, I leave thee Lady and commandresse of all that is mine. Can an inordinate appetite, cause thee to be carelesse of thine honour, and of him that loves thee as his owne life? Alas, my fairest hope, say no more so, but returne home with me, and now that I am acquainted with thy inclination; I will endeavour heereafter to give thee better contentment. Wherefore (deare heart) doe not denie me, but change thy minde, and goe with me, for I never saw merry day since I lost thee.

Sir (quoth she) I desire no body to have care of mine honour, beside my selfe, because it cannot be here abused. And as for my Parents, what respect had they of me, when they made me your wife? If then they could be so carelesse of mee, what reason have I to regard them now? And whereas you taxe me, that I cannot live here without capitall sin; farre is the thought thereof from me: for, here I am regarded as the wife of Pagamino, but at Pisa, you reputed me not worthy your society: because, by the point of the Moone, and the quadratures of Geometrie; the Planets held conjunction betweene you and me, whereas here I am subject to no such constellations. You say beside, that hereafter you will strive to give me better contentment then you have done; surely, in mine opinion it is no way possible, because our complexions are so farre different, as yce is from fire, or gold from drosse. As for your allegation, of this Gentlemans rejecting me, when his humour is satisfied; should it prove to be so (as it is the least part of my feare) what fortune soever shall betide me, never will I make any meanes to you, what miseries or misadventures may happen to me; but the world will affoord me one resting place or other, and more to my contentment, then if I were with you. Therefore I tell you once againe, to live secured from all offence to holy Saints, and not to injure their feasts, fasts, vigills, and other ceremonious seasons: here is my demourance, and from hence I purpose not to part.

Our Judge was now in a wofull perplexity, and confessing his folly, in marying a wife so young, and far unfit for his age and abilitie: being halfe desperate, sad and displeased, he came forth of the Chamber, using divers speeches to Pagamino, whereof he made little or no account at all: and in the end, without any other successe, left his wife there, and returned home to Pisa. There further afflictions fell upon him, because the people began to scorne him, demanding dayly of him, what was become of his gallant young wife, making hornes, with ridiculous pointings at him: whereby his sences became distracted, so that he ran raving about the streetes, and afterward died in very miserable manner. Which newes came no sooner to the eare of Pagamino, but, in the honourable affection hee bare to Bertolomea, he maried her, with great solemnity; banishing all Fasts, Vigils, and Lents from his house, and living with her in much felicity. Wherfore (faire Ladies) I am of opinion, that Bernardo of Geneway, in his disputation with Ambroginolo; might have shewne himselfe a great deale wiser, and sparing his rash proceeding with his wife.

This tale was so merrily entertained among the whole company, that each one smiling upon another, with one consent commended Dioneus, maintaining that he spake nothing but the truth, and condemning Bernardo for his cruelty. Upon a generall silence commanded, the Queen perceiving that the time was now very farre spent, and every one had delivered their severall Novels, which likewise gave a period to her Royalty: she gave the Crowne to Madam Neiphila, pleasantly speaking to her in this order. Heereafter, the government of these few people is committed to your trust and care, for with the day concludeth my dominion. Madam Neiphila, blushing at the honor done unto her, her cheekes appeared of a vermillion tincture, her eyes glittering with gracefull desires, and sparkeling like the morning Starre. And after the modest murmure of the Assistants was ceased, and her courage in chearfull manner setled, seating her selfe higher then she did before, thus she spake.

Seeing it is so, that you have elected me your Queene, to varie somewhat from the course observed by them that went before me, whose governement you have all so much commended: by approbation of your counsell, I am desirous to speake my mind, concerning what I wold have to be next followed. It is not unknowne to you all, that to morrow shal be Friday, and Saturday the next day following, which are daies somewhat molestuous to the most part of men, for preparation of their weekly food and sustenance. Moreover, Friday ought to be reverendly respected, in remembrance of him, who died to give us life, and endured his bitter passion, as on that day; which makes me to hold it fit and expedient, that wee should mind more weighty matters, and rather attend our prayers and devotions, then the repetition of tales or Novels. Now concerning Saturday, it hath bin a custome observed among women, to bath and wash themselves from such immundicities as the former weekes toile hath imposed on them. Beside, it is a day of fasting, in honour of the ensuing Sabbath, whereon no labor may be done, but the observation of holy exercises.

By that which hath bin saide, you may easily conceive, that the course which we have hitherto continued, cannot bee prosecuted in one and the same manner: wherefore, I would advise and do hold it an action wel performed by us, to cease for these few dayes, from recounting any other Novels. And because we have remained here foure daies already, except we would allow the enlarging of our company, with some other friends that may resort unto us: I thinke it necessary to remove from hence, and take our pleasure in another place, which is already by me determined. When we shalbe there assembled, and have slept on the discourses formerly delivered, let our next argument be still the mutabilities of Fortune, but especially to concerne such persons, as by their wit and ingenuity, industriously have attained to some matter earnestly desired, or else recovered againe, after the losse. Heereon let us severally study and premeditate, that the hearers may receive benefit thereby, with the comfortable maintenance of our harmelesse recreations; the priviledge of Dioneus alwayes reserved to himselfe.

Every one commended the Queens deliberation, concluding that it shold be accordingly prosecuted: and thereupon, the master of the houshold was called, to give him order for that evenings Table service, and what else concerned the time of the Queenes Royalty, wherein he was sufficiently instructed: which being done, the company arose, licensing every one to doe what they listed. The Ladies and Gentlemen walked to the Garden, and having sported themselves there a while; when the houre of supper came, they sate downe, and fared very daintily. Being risen from the Table, according to the Queenes command, Madam Æmilia led the dance, and the ditty following, was sung by Madam Pampinea, being answered by all the rest, as a Chorus.

THE SONG

And if not I, what Lady else can sing,
Of those delights, which kind contentment bring?

Come, come, sweet Love, the cause of my chiefe good,
Of all my hopes, the firme and full effect;
Sing wee together, but in no sad mood,
Of sighes or teares, which joy doth countercheck:
Stolne pleasures are delightfull in the taste,
But yet Loves fire is oftentimes too fierce;
Consuming comfort with ore-speedy haste,
Which into gentle hearts too far doth pierce.
And if not I, etc.
The first day that I felt this fiery heate,
So sweete a passion did possesse my soule,
That though I found the torment sharpe, and great;
Yet still me thought t'was but a sweete controule.
Nor could I count it rude, or rigorous,
Taking my wound from such a piercing eye:
As made the paine most pleasing, gracious,
That I desire in such assaults to die.
And if not I, etc.

Grant then great God of Love, that I may still
Enjoy the benefit of my desire;
And honour her with all my deepest skill,
That first enflam'd my heart with holy fire.
To her my bondage is free liberty,
My sicknesse health, my tortures sweet repose;
Say shee the word, in full felicity
All my extreames joyne in an happy close.
Then if not I, what Lover else can sing,
Of those delights which kind contentment bring?

After this Song was ended, they sung divers other beside, and having great variety of instruments, they played to them as many pleasing dances. But the Queene considering that the meete houre for rest was come, with their lighted Torches before them, they all repaired to their Chambers; sparing the other dayes next succeeding, for those reasons by the Queene alledged, and spending the Sunday in solemne devotion.

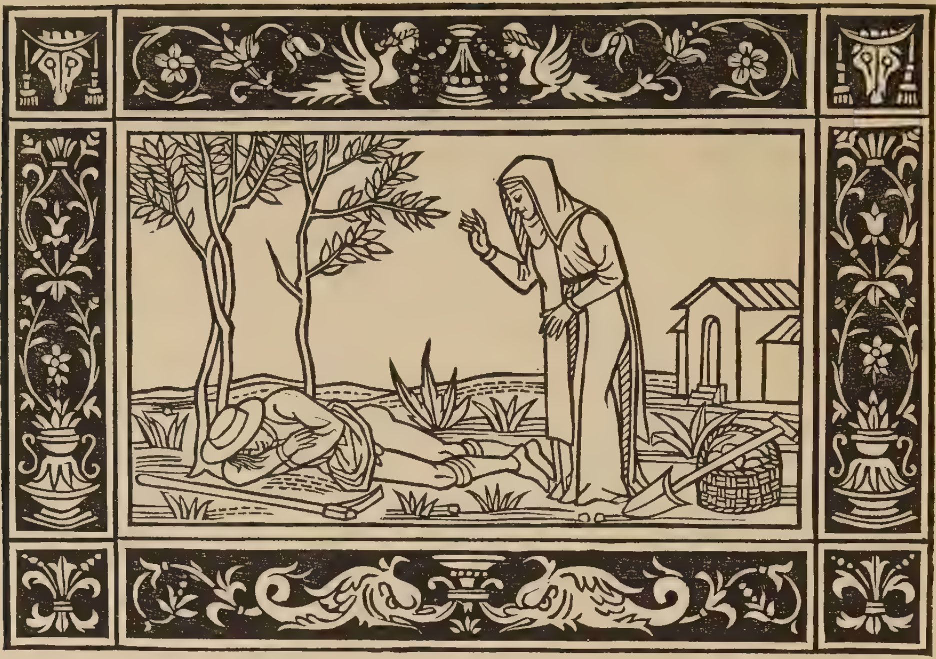
THE INDUCTION TO THE THIRD DAY

UPON WHICH DAY, ALL MATTERS TO BE DISCOURSED ON, DOE PASSE UNDER THE REGIMENT OF MADAM NEIPHILA: CONCERNING SUCH PERSONS AS (BY THEIR WIT AND INDUSTRY) HAVE ATTAINED TO THEIR LONG WISHED DESIRES, OR RECOVERED SOMETHING, SUPPOSED TO BE LOST.

THE morning put on a vermillion countenance and made the Sunne to rise blushing red, when the Queene (and all the faire company) were come abroad forth of their Chambers; the Seneshall or great Master of the Houshold, having (long before) sent all things necessary to the place of their next intended meeting. And the people which prepared there every needfull matter, suddainely when they saw the Queene was setting forward, charged all the rest of their followers, as if it had beene preparation for a Campe; to make hast away with the carriages, the rest of the Familie remaining behind, to attend upon the Ladies and Gentlemen.

With a milde, majesticke, and gentle pace, the Queene rode on, being followed by the other Ladies, and the three young Gentlemen, taking their way towards the West; conducted by the musicall notes of sweete singing Nightingales, and infinite other pretty Birds beside, riding in a tract not much frequented, but richly abounding with faire hearbes and flowres, which by reason of the Sunnes high mounting, beganne to open their bosome.

But, after the dayes warmth was more mildely qualified, and every one had made benefit of their best content: they went (by order sent from the Queene) into the Meadow where the Fountaine stood, and being set about it, as they used to do in telling their Tales (the argument appointed by the Queene being propounded) the first that had the charge imposed, was Philostratus, who began in this manner.



WHEREIN IS DECLARED, THAT VIRGINITY IS VERY HARDLY TO BE KEPT IN ALL PLACES.

MASSETTO *di Lamporechio, by counterfetting himselfe to be dumbe, became a Gardiner in a Monastery of Nunnes, where he had familiar conversation with them all.*

MOST worthy Ladies, there wants no store of men and women, that are so simple, as to credit for a certainty, that so soon as a yong virgin hath the veile put on hir head, and the black Cowle given to cover her withall, she is no longer a woman, nor more sensible of feminine affections, then as if in turning Nun, shee became converted to a stone. And if (perchance) they heard some matters, contrary to their former perswasion; then they grow so furiously offended, as if one had committed a most foule and enormous sinne, directly against the course of Nature. And the torrent of this opinion hurries them on so violently, that they wil admit no leisure to consider, how (in such a scope of liberty) they have power to doe what they list, yea beyond all meanes of sufficient satisfying, never remembring how potent the priviledge of idlenes is, especially when it is backt by solitude. In like manner, there are other people now, who verily beleeve, that the Spade and Pickaxe, grosse feeding and labour, do quench al sensual and fleshly concupiscence, yea, in such as till and husband the ground, by making them dull, blockish, and (almost) meere senslesse of understanding. But I will approve (according as the Queene hath commanded me, and within the compasse of her direction) by a short and pleasant Tale; how greatly they are abused by errour, that build upon so weake a foundation.

Not farre from Alexandria, there was a great and goodly Monasterie, belonging to the Lord of those parts, who is termed the Admirall. And therein, under the care and trust of one woman, divers virgins were kept as recluses, or Nuns, vowed to chastity of life; out of whose number, the Soldan of Babylon (under whom they lived in subjection) at every three yeers end, had usually three of these virgins sent him. At the time wherof I am now to speake, there remained in the Monastery, no more but eight religious Sisters only, beside the Lady Abbesse, and an honest poor man, who was a Gardiner, and kept the Garden in commendable order.

His wages being small, and he not well contented therewith, would serve there no longer: but making his accounts even, with the Factotum or Bayliffe belonging to the house, returned thence to the village of Lamporechio, being a native of the place. Among many other that gave him welcom home, was a yong Hebrew pezant of the country, sturdy, strong and yet comely of person, being named Masset. But because he was born not farre off from Lamporechio, and had there bin brought up all his yonger dayes, his name of Masset (according to their vulgar speech) was turned to Massetto, and therefore he was usually called and knowne by the name of Massetto of Lamporechio.

Massetto, falling in talke with the honest poore man, whose name was Lurco, demanded of him what services hee had done in the Monasterie, having continued there so long a time? Quoth Lurco, I laboured in the Garden, which is very faire and great; then I went to the Forest to fetch home wood, and cleft it for their Chamber fuell, drawing up all theyr water beside, with many other toilsome services else: but the allowance of my wages was so little, as it would not pay for the shoes I wore. And that which was worst of all, they being all yong women, I thinke the divel dwels among them, for a man cannot doe any thing to please them. When I have bene busie at my worke in the garden, one would come and say, Put this heere, put that there; and others would take the dibble out of my hand, telling me, that I did not performe any thing well, making me so weary of their continuall trifling, as I have lefte all busines, given over the Garden, and what for one mollestation, as also many other; I intended to tarry no longer there, but came away, as thou seest. And yet the Factotum desired me at my departing, that if I knew any one who would undertake the aforesaid labours, I should send him thither, as (indeed) I promised to do: but let mee fall sicke and dye, before I helpe to send them any.

When Massetto had heard the words of Lurco, hee was so desirous to dwell among the Nunnes, that nothing else now hammered in his head: for he meant more subtilly than poore Lurco did, and made no doubt to please them sufficiently. Then considering with himselfe, how best he might bring his intent to effect; which appeared not easily to bee done. He could question no further therein with Lurco, but onely demaunded other matter of him, saying: Introth thou didst well Lurco, to come away from so tedious a dwelling, had he not need to be more then a man that is to live with such women? It were better for him to dwell among so many divels, because they understand not the tenth part that womens wily wits can dive into.

After their conference was ended, Massetto began to beate his braines how he might compasse to dwell among them, and knowing that he could wel enough performe all the labours whereof Lurco had made mention, he cared not for any losse he should sustaine thereby, but onely stood in doubt of his entertainment, because he was too yong and sprightly. Having pondered on many imaginations, he said to himselfe. The place is farre enough distant hence, and none there can take knowledge of mee; if I have wit sufficient, cleanely to make them beleeve that I am dumbe, then (questionles) I shal be received. And resolving to prosecute this determination, he tooke a Spade on his shoulder, and without revealing to any body whether hee went, in the disguise of a poore labouring Countryman, he travelled to the Monastery.

When he was there arrived, he found the great gate open, and entering in boldly, it was his good hap to espy the Fac-totum in the court, according as Lurco had given description of him. Making signes before him, as if he were both dumbe and deafe; he manifested, that he craved an Almes for Gods sake, making shewes beside, that if need required, he could cleave wood, or doe any reasonable kinde of service. The Fac-totum gladly gave him food, and afterward shewed him divers knotty logs of wood, which the weake strength of Lurco had left uncloven; but this fellow being more active and lusty, quickly rent them all to pieces. Now it so fell out, that the Fac-totum must needs go to the Forrest, and tooke Massetto along with him thither: where causing him to fell divers Trees, by signes he bad him to lade the two Asses therewith, which commonly carried home all the wood, and so drive them to the Monasterie before him, which Massetto knew well enough how to do, and performed it very effectually.

Many other servile Offices were there to bee done, which caused the Fac-totum to make use of his paines divers other dayes beside; in which time, the Lady Abbesse chancing to see him, demanded of the Fac-totum what he was? Madam (quoth hee) a poore labouring man, who is both deafe and dumbe, hither he came to crave an almes the other day, the which in charity I could do no lesse but give him; for which, hee hath done many honest services about the house. It seemes beside, that hee hath pretty skill in Gardening, so that if I can perswade him to continue here, I make no question of his able services: for the old silly man is gon, and we have need of such a stout fellow, to do the busines belonging to the Monastery, and one fitter for the turne, comes sildome hither. Moreover, in regard of his double imperfections, the Sisters can sustaine no impeachment by him. Whereto the Abbesse answered, saying; By the faith of my body, you speake but the truth: understand then, if hee have any knowledge in Gardening, and whether hee will dwell heere, or no: which compasse so kindly as you can. Let him have a new paire of shoes, fill his belly daily full of meate, flatter, and make much of him, for wee shall finde him worke enough to do. All which, the Fac-totum promised to fulfill sufficiently.

Massetto, who was not far off from them all this while, but seemed seriously busied about sweeping and making cleane the Court, heard all these speeches; and being not a little joyfull of them; said to himselfe. If once I come to worke in your Garden, let the proofe yeeld praise of my skill and knowledge. When the Fac-totum perceived, that he knew perfectly how to undergo his businesse, and had questioned him by signes, concerning his willingnesse to serve there still, and received the like answere also, of his dutifull readinesse thereto; he gave him order to worke in the Garden, because the season did now require it; and to leave all other affayres for the Monastery, attending now onely the Gardens preparation.

As Massetto was thus about his Garden emploiment, the Nunnes began to resort thither, and thinking the man to be dumbe and deafe indeede, were the more lavish of their language, mocking and flowting him very immodestly, as being perswaded, that he heard them not. And the Lady Abbesse, thinking he might as well be an Eunuch, as deprived both of hearing and speaking, stood the lesse in feare of the Sisters walkes, but referred them to their owne care and providence. On a day, Massetto having laboured somewhat extraordinarily, lay downe to rest himselfe awhile under the trees, and two delicate yong Nunnes, walking there to take the aire, drew neere to the place where he dissembled sleeping; and both of them observing his comelinesse of person, began to pitty the poverty of his condition; but much more the misery of his great defectes. Then one of them, who had a little livelier spirit then the other, thinking Massetto to be fast asleepe, began in this manner.

Sister (quoth she) if I were faithfully assured of thy secrecie, I would tell thee a thing which I have often thought on, and it may (perhaps) redound to thy profit. Sister, replyed the other Nun, speake your minde boldly, and beleeve it (on my Maidenhead) that I will never reveale it to any creature living. Encouraged by this solemne answere, the first Nun thus prosecuted her former purpose, saying. I know not Sister, whether it hath entred into thine understanding or no, how strictly we are here kept and attended, never any man daring to adventure among us, except our good and honest Fac-totum, who is very aged; and this dumbe fellow, maimed, and made imperfect by nature, and therefore not worthy the title of a man. Ah Sister, it hath oftentimes bin told me, by Gentlewomen comming hither to visite us, that all other sweetes in the world, are mockeries, to the incomparable pleasures of man and woman, of which we are barred by our unkind parents, binding us to perpetuall chastity, which they were never able to observe themselves.

A Sister of this house once told me, that before her turne came to be sent to the Soldane, she fell in frailty with a man that was both lame and blinde, and discovering the same to her Ghostly Father in confession; he absolved her of that sinne; affirming, that she had not transgressed with a man, because he wanted his rationall and understanding parts. Behold Sister, heere lyes a creature, almost formed in the self-same mold, dumbe and deafe, which are two the most rationall and understanding parts that do belong to any man, and therefore no Man, wanting them. If folly and frailty would be committed with him (as many times since hee came hither it hath run in my minde) hee is by Nature, sworne to such secrecie, that he cannot (if he would) be a blabbe thereof. Beside, the Lawes and constitution of our Religion doth teach us, that a sinne so assuredly concealed, is more then halfe absolved.

Ave Maria Sister (saide the other Nun) what kinde of words are these you utter? Doe not you know, that we have promised our virginity to God? Oh Sister (answered the other) how many things are promised to him every day, and not one of a thousand kept or performed? If wee have made him such a promise, and some of our weaker-witted sisters do performe it for us, no doubt but he will accept it in part of payment. Yea but Sister, replied the second Nun againe, there is another danger lying in the way: If we prove to be with childe, how shall we doe then? Sister (quoth our couragious wench) thou art affraide of harme before it happen: if it come so to passe, let us consider on it then: thou art but a Novice in matters of such moment, we are provided of a thousand meanes, whereby to prevent conception. Or, if they should faile, we are so surely fitted, that the world shall never know it. Let it suffice, our lives must not be by any so much as suspected, our Monastery questioned, or our Religion rashly scandalized. Thus shee schooled her younger Sister in wit, albeit as forward as shee in will, and longed as desirouslie, to know what kinde of creature man was.

After some other questions, how this intention of theirs might bee safely brought to full effect: the sprightly Nun that had wit at will, thus answered. You see Sister (quoth she) it is now the houre of midday, when all the rest of our sisterhood are quiet in their Chambers, because we are then allowed to sleep, for our earlier rising to morning Mattins. Here are none in the Garden now but our selves, and while I awake him, bee you the watch, and afterward follow mee in my fortune, for I will valiantly leade you the way. Massetto immitating a Dogges sleepe, heard all this conspiracie intended against him, and longed as earnestly till shee came to awake him. Which being done, he seeming very simple and sottish, and she chearing him with flattering behaviour: into the close Arbour they went, which the Sunnes bright eye could not pierce into, and there I leave it to the Nunnes owne approbation, whether Massetto was a man rationall, or no. Ill deeds require longer time to contrive, then act; and both the Nuns having bene with Massetto at this new forme of confession, were enjoyned (by him) such an easie and silent penance, as brought them the oftner to shrift, and made him to proove a very perfect Confessour.

Desires obtayned, but not fully satisfied, doe commonly urge more frequent accesse, then wisedome thinkes expedient, or can continue without discovery. Our two joviall Nunnes, not a little proud of their private stolne pleasures, so long resorted to the close Arbour, till another Sister, who had often observed their haunt thither, by meanes of a little hole in her Window; that shee began to suspect them with Massetto, and imparted the same to two other Sisters, all three concluding, to accuse them before the Lady Abbesse. But upon a further conference had with the Offenders, they changed opinion, tooke the same oath as the forewomen had done; and because they would be free from any taxation at all: they revealed their adventures to the other three ignorants, and so fell all eight into one formall confederacie, but by good and warie observation, least the Abbesse her selfe should descry them; finding poore Massetto such plenty of Garden-worke, as made him verie doubtfull in pleasing them all.

It came to passe in the end, that the Lady Abbesse who all this while imagined no such matter, walking all alone in the garden on a day, found Massetto sleeping under an Almond tree, having then very litle businesse to doe, because he had wrought hard all the night before. She observed him to be an hansome man, young, lusty, well-limbde and proportioned, having a mercifull commisseration of his dumbenesse and deafenes, being perswaded also in like manner, that if hee were an Eunuch too, hee deserved a thousand times the more to be pittied. The season was exceeding hot, and he lay downe so carelesly to sleepe, that somthing was noted, wherein shee intended to be better resolved, almost falling sicke of the other Nunnes disease. Having awaked him, she commanded him by signes that he should follow her to her chamber, where he was kept close so long, that the Nunnes grew offended, because the Gardiner came not to his daily labour.

Well may you imagine that Massetto was no misse-proud man now, to be thus advanced from the Garden to the Chamber, and by no worse woman then the Lady Abbesse her selfe: what signes, shews, or what language he speaks there, I am not able to expresse; onely it appeared, that his behaviour pleased her so well, as it procured his daily repairing thether; and acquainted her with such familiar conversation, as she would have condemned in the Nunnes her daughters, but that they were wise enough to keepe it from her. Now began Massetto to consider, that hee had undertaken a taske belonging to great Hercules, in giving content to so many, and by continuing dumbe in this maner, it would redound to his no meane detriment. Whereupon, as he was one night sitting by the Abbesse, the string that retained his tongue from speech, brake on a sodaine, and thus he spake.

Madam, I have often heard it said, that one Cocke may doe service to ten several Hennes, but ten men can very hardly even with all their best endeavour, give full satisfaction every way to one woman; and yet I am tied to content nine, which is farre beyond the compasse of my power to do. Already have I performed so much Garden and Chamber-work, that I confesse my selfe starke tired, and can travaile no further, and therefore let me entreate you to lycense my departure hence, or finde some meanes for my better ease. The Abbesse hearing him speake, who had so long bene there dumbe, being stricken into admiration, and accounting it almost a miracle, said. How commeth this to passe? I verily beleeved thee to be dumbe. Madam (quoth Massetto) so I was indeed, but not by Nature; onely I had a long lingering sicknes which bereft me of speech, and which I have not onely recovered againe this night, but shal ever remaine thankfull to you for it.

The Abbesse verily credited his answer, demanding what he meant in saying, that he did service to nine? Madam, quoth he, this were a dangerous question, and not easily answered before all the eight Sisters. Upon this reply, the Abbesse plainely perceived, that not onely she had fallen into folly, but all the Nunnes likewise cried guilty too: wherfore being a woman of sound discretion, she would not grant that Massetto should depart, but to keepe him still about the Nunnes businesse, because the Monastery should not be scandalized by him. And the Fac-totum being dead a little before, his strange recovery of speech revealed, and some things else more neerely concerning them: by generall consent, and with the good liking of Massetto, he was created the Fac-totum of the Monasterie.

All the neighboring people dwelling thereabout, who knew Massetto to be dumbe, by fetching home wood daily from the Forest, and divers employments in other places, were made to beleeve, that by the Nunnes devout prayers and discipline, as also the merite of the Saint, in whose honour the Monastery was built and erected, Massetto had his long restrained speech restored, and was now become their sole Factotum, having power now to employ others in drudgeries, and ease himselfe of all such labours. And albeit he made the Nunnes to be fruitfull, by encreasing some store of yonger sisters, yet all matters were so close and cleanly carried, as it was never talkt of, till after the death of the Ladie Abbesse, when Massetto beganne to grow in good yeeres, and desired to returne home to his native abiding, which (within a while after) was granted him.

Thus Massetto being rich and olde, returned home like a wealthy father, taking no care for the nursing of his children, but bequeathed them to the place where they were bred and borne, having (by his wit and ingenious apprehension) made such a benefit of his youthfull yeeres, that now he merrily tooke ease in his age.

THE SECOND NOVELL

WHEREIN IS SIGNIFIED, THE PROVIDENCE OF A WISE MAN, WHEN HE SHALL HAVE REASON TO USE REVENGE. AND THE CUNNING MEANES OF ANOTHER, WHEN HEE COMPASSETH CRAFT TO DEFEND HIMSELFE FROM PERILL.

A QUERRY *of the Stable, belonging to Agilulffo, King of the Lombardes, found the meanes of accesse to the Queenes bed, without any knowledge or consent in her. This being secretly discovered by the King, and the party known, he gave him a marke, by shearing the haire of his head. Whereupon, he that was so shorne, sheared likewise the heads of all his fellowes in the lodging, and so escaped the punishment intended towards him.*

WHEN the Novel of Philostratus was concluded, which made some of the Ladies blush, and the rest to smile: it pleased the Queene, that Madam Pampinea should follow next, to second the other gone before; when she, smiling on the whole assembly, began thus. There are some men so shallow of capacity, that they will (neverthelesse) make shew of knowing and understanding such things, as neither they are able to doe, nor appertaine to them: whereby they will sometimes reprehend other new errours, and such faults as they have unwillingly committed, thinking thereby to hide their owne shame, when they make it much more apparant and manifest. For proofe whereof, faire company, in a contrary kinde I will shew you the subtill cunning of one, who (perhaps) may bee reputed of lesse reckning then Massetto; and yet he went beyond a King, that thought himselfe to be a much wiser man.

Agilulffo, King of Lombardie, according as his Predecessours had done before him, made the principall seate of his Kingdome, in the Citie of Pavia, having embraced in mariage, Tendelinga, the late left widdow of Vetario, who likewise had beene King of the Lombards; a most beautifull wife and vertuous Lady, but made unfortunate by a mischance. The occurrences and estate of the whole Realme, being in an honourable, quiet and well setled condition, by the discreete care and providence of the King; a Querrie appertaining to the Queenes Stable of Horse, being a man but of meane and low quality, though comely of person, and of equall stature to the King; became immeasurably amorous of the Queene. And because his base and servile condition, had endued him with so much understanding, as to know infallibly, that his affection was mounted beyond the compasse of conveniencie: wisely he concealed it to himselfe, not acquainting any one therewith, or daring so much, as to discover it either by lookes, or any other affectionate behaviour.

And although hee lived utterly hopelesse, of ever attaining to his hearts desires; yet notwithstanding, hee proudly gloried, that his love had soared so high a pitch, as to be enamoured of a Queene. And dayly, as the fury of his flame encreased; so his cariage was farre above his fellowes and companions, in the performing of all such serviceable duties, as any way he imagined might content the Queene. Whereon ensued, that whensoever shee roade abroad to take the ayre, shee used oftner to mount on the Horse, which this Querrie brought when shee made her choise, then any of the other that were led by his fellowes. And this did he esteeme as no meane happinesse to him, to order the stirrope for her mounting, and therefore gave dayly his due attendance: so that, to touch the Stirrop, but (much more) to put her foote into it, or touch any part of her garments, he thought it the onely heaven on earth.

But, as we see it oftentimes come to passe, that by how much the lower hope declineth, so much the higher love ascendeth; even so fell it out with this poore Querry; for, most irkesome was it to him, to endure the heavy waight of his continuall oppressions, not having any hope at all of the very least mitigation. And being utterly unable to relinquish his love divers times he resolved on some desperate conclusion, which might yet give the world an evident testimony, that he dyed for the love he bare to the Queene. And upon this determination, hee grounded the successe of his future fortune, to dye in compassing some part of his desire, without either speaking to the Queene, or sending any missive of his love; for to speake or write, were meerely in vaine, and drew on a worser consequence then death, which he could bestow on himselfe more easily, and when he listed.

No other course now beleagers his braines, but onely for secret accesse to the Queenes bed, and how he might get entrance into her Chamber, under colour of the King, who (as he knew very well) slept many nights together from the Queene. Wherefore, to see in what manner, and what the usuall habit was of the King, when he came to keepe companie with his Queene: he hid himselfe divers nights in a Gallery, which was betweene both their lodging Chambers. At length, he saw the King come forth of his Chamber, himselfe all alone, with a faire night-mantle wrapt about him, carrying a lighted Taper in the one hand, and a small white Wand in the other, so went he on to the Queenes lodging; and knocking at the doore once or twice with the wand, and not using any word, the doore opened, the light was left without, and he entered the Chamber, where he stayed not long, before his returning backe againe, which likewise very diligently he observed.

So familiar was he in the Wardrobe, by often fetching and returning the King and Queenes furnitures; that the fellowes to the same Mantle which the King wore when he went to the Queene, very secretly he conveighed away thence with him, being provided of a Light, and the very like Wand. Now bestowes he costly bathings on his body, that the least sent of the Stable might not be felt about him; and finding a time sutable to his desire, when he knew the King to bee at rest in his owne Lodging, and all else sleeping in their bed; closely he steals into the Gallery, where alighting his Taper, with the Tinder purposely brought thither, the Mantle folded about him, and the Wand in his hand, valiantly he adventures upon his lives perill. Twice hee knockt softly at the doore, which a wayting woman immediately opened, and receyving the Light, went forth into the Gallery, while the supposed King, was conversing with the Queene.

Alas good Queene, heere is a sinne committed, without any guiltie thought in thee, as (within a while after) it plainely appeared. For, the Querry having compassed what he most coveted, and fearing to forfeite his life by delay, when his amorous desire was indifferently satisfied: returned backe as he came, the sleepy waiting woman not so much as looking on him, but rather glad, that she might get her to rest againe. Scarcely was the Querrie stept into his bed, unheard or discerned by any of his fellowes, divers of them lodging both in that and the next Chamber: but it pleased the King to visite the Queene, according to his wonted manner, to the no little mervaile of the drowsie wayting woman, who was never twice troubled in a night before. The King being in bed, whereas alwayes till then, his resort to the Queene, was altogether in sadnesse and melancholly, both comming and departing without speaking one word: now his Majestie was become more pleasantly disposing, whereat the Queene began not a little to mervaile. Now trust mee Sir, quoth shee, this hath beene a long wished, and now most welcome alteration, vouchsafing twice in a night to visite me, and both within the compasse of one houre; for it cannot be much more, since your being here, and now comming againe.

The King hearing these words, sodainely presumed, that by some counterfeit person or other, the Queene had beene this night beguiled: wherefore (very advisedly) hee considered, that in regard the party was unknowne to her, and all the women about her; to make no outward appearance of knowing it, but rather concealed it to himselfe. Farre from the indiscretion of some haire-braind men, who presently would have answered and sworne; I came not hither this night, till now. Whereupon many dangers might ensue, to the dishonour and prejudice of the Queene: beside, her error being discovered to her, might afterward be an occasion, to urge a wandring in her appetite, and to covet after change againe. But by this silence, no shame redounded to him or her, whereas prating, must needs be the publisher of open infamie: yet was hee much vexed in his minde, which neither by lookes or words hee would discover, but pleasantly said to the Queene, Why Madam, although I was once heere before to night, I hope you mislike not my second seeing you, nor if I should please to come againe. No truly Sir, quoth she, I onely desire you to have care of your health. Well, said the King, I will follow your counsaile, and now returne to mine owne lodging againe, committing my Queene to her good rest.

His blood boyling with rage and distemper, by such a monstrous injurie offered him; he wrapt his night-mantle about him, and leaving his Chamber, imagining, that whatsoever he was, needs he must be one of his owne house: he tooke a light in his hand, and convayed it into a little Lanthorne, purposing to be resolved in his suspition. No guests or strangers were now in his Court, but onely such as belonged to his houshold, who lodged altogether about the Escurie and Stables, being there appointed to divers beds. Now, this was his conceite, that whosoever had beene so lately familiar with the Queene, his heart and his pulse could (as yet) be hardly at rest, but rather would be troubled with apparant agitation, as discovering the guilt of so great an offender. Many Chambers had he passed thorow, where all were soundly sleeping, and yet he felt both their brests and pulses.

At last he came to the lodging of the man indeede, that had so impudently usurped his place, who could not as yet sleepe, for joy of his atchieved adventure. When he espied the King come in, knowing well the occasion of his search, he began to waxe very doubtfull, so that his heart and pulse beating extreamely, he felt a further addition of feare, as being confidently perswaded, that there was now no other way but death, especially if the King discovered his agony. And although many considerations were in his braine, yet because he saw that the King was unarmed, his best refuge was, to make shew of sleepe, in expectation what the King intended to doe. Among them all he had sought, yet could not find any likelihood, whereby to gather a grounded probability; untill he came to this Querry, whose heart and pulses laboured so strongly, that he said to himselfe, Yea mary, this is the man that did the deede.

Nevertheless, purposing to make no apparance of his further intention, he did nothing else to him, but drawing forth a paire of sheares, which purposely he brought thither with him, he clipped away a part of his lockes, which (in those times) they used to weare very long, to the end that he might the better know him the next morning, and so returned backe to his lodging againe. The Querry, who partly saw, but felt what was done to him; perceived plainely (being a subtill ingenious fellow) for what intent he was thus marked. Wherefore, without any longer dallying, up he rose, and taking a paire of sheares, wherewith they used to trim their Horses; softly he went from bed to bed, where they all lay yet soundly sleeping, and clipt away each mans locke from his right eare, in the selfe same manner as the King had done his, and being not perceived by any one of them, quietly he laide him downe againe.

In the morning, when the King was risen, he gave command that before the Pallace gates were opened, all his whole Family should come before him, as instantly his will was fulfilled. Standing all uncovered in his presence, he began to consider with himselfe, which of them was the man that he had marked. And seeing the most part of them to have their lockes cut, all after one and the selfe same manner; marvailing greatly, he saide to himselfe. The man whom I seeke for, though he be but of meane and base condition, yet it plainely appeareth, that he is of no deject or common understanding. And seeing, that without further clamour and noyse, he could not find out the party he looked for, he concluded, not to win eternall shame, by compassing a poore revenge: but rather (by way of admonition) to let the offender know in a word, that he was both noted and observed. So turning to them all, he saide; He that hath done it, let him be silent, and doe so no more, and now depart about your businesse.

Some other turbulent spirited man, no imprisonments, tortures, examinations, and interrogations, could have served his turne;

by which course of proceeding, he makes the shame to be publikely knowne, which reason requireth to keepe concealed. But admit that condigne vengeance were taken, it diminisheth not one tittle of the shame, neither qualifieth the peoples bad affections, who will lash out as liberally in scandal, and upon the very least babling rumor. Such therfore as heard the Kings words, few though they were, yet truly wise; marvelled much at them, and by long examinations among themselves, questioned, but came far short of his meaning; the man onely excepted whom indeed they concerned, and by whom they were never discovered, so long as the King lived, neither did he dare at any time after, to hazard his life in the like action, under the frownes or favour of Fortune.

THE THIRD NOVELL

DECLARING, THAT THE LEWD QUALITIES OF SOME PERSONS, OFTENTIMES MISGUIDE GOOD PEOPLE, INTO GREAT AND GREEVOUS ERRORS.

UNDER *colour of Confession, and of a most pure conscience, a faire yong Gentlewoman, being amourously affected to an honest man, induced a devoute and solemne religious Friar, to advise her in the meanes (without his suspition or perceiving) how to enjoy the benefit of her friend, and bring her desires to their full effect.*

WHEN Madam Pampinea sate silent, and the Querries boldnesse equalled with his crafty cunning, and great wisedom in the King had passed amongst them with a generall applause; the Queene turning her selfe to Madam Philomena, appointed her to follow next in order as the rest had done before her: whereupon Philomena began after this maner.

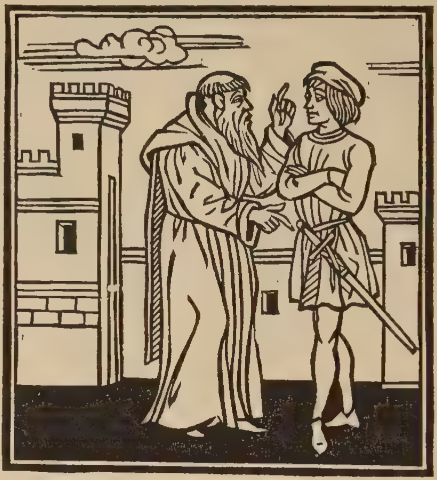
It is my purpose, to acquaint you with a notable mockerie, which was performed (not in jest, but earnest) by a faire Gentlewoman, to a grave and devoute Religious Friar, which will yeelde so much the more pleasure and recreation, to every secular understander, if but diligently he or she doe observe, how commonly those Religious persons (at least the most part of them) like notorious fooles, are the inventers of new courses and customes, as thinking themselves more wise and skilful in all things then any other; yet prove to be of no worth or validity, addicting the verie best of all their devices, to expresse their owne vilenesse of mind, and fatten themselves in their styes like to pampered Swine. And assure your selves worthy Ladies, that I doe not tell this tale onely to follow the order enjoyned me; but also to informe you that such Saint-like holy Sirs, of whom we are too opinionate and credulous, may be, yea and are (divers times) cunningly met withall, in theyr craftinesse, not onely by men, but likewise some of our owne sexe, as I shall make it apparant to you.

In our owne City (more full of craft and deceit, then love or faithfull dealing) there lived not many yeeres since, a Gentlewoman of good spirit, highly minded, endued with beauty and all commendable qualities, as any other woman (by nature) could be. Her name, or any others, concerned in this Novel, I meane not to make manifest, albeit I know them, because some are yet living, and thereby may be scandalized; and therefore it shall suffice to passe them over with a smile. This Gentlewoman, seeing her selfe to be descended of very great parentage, and (by chance) married to an Artezan, a Cloathyer or Draper, that lived by the making and selling of cloth. Shee could not (because he was a Tradesman) take downe the height of her minde; conceiving, that no man of meane condition (how rich soever) was worthy to enjoy a Gentlewoman in marriage. Observing moreover, that with all his wealth and treasure, he understood nothing better, then to open skeines of yarne, fill shuttles, lay webbes in his Loomes, or dispute with his Spinsters, about their businesse.

Being thus over-swayed with her proud opinion, she would no longer be embraced or regarded by him in any manner, saving only because she could not refuse him, but would find some other for her better satisfaction, who might seeme more worthy of her respect, then the Draper her Husband did. Heereupon shee fell so deepe in love with a verie honest man of our City also, and of indifferent yeeres, as what day shee saw him not, shee could take no rest the night ensuing. The man himselfe knew nothing hereof, and therefore was the more carelesse: and she being curious, nice, yet wisely considerate, durst not let him understand it, neither by any womans close conveyed message, nor yet by Letters, as fearing the perils which happen in such cases. But her eye observing his dayly walkes and resorts, gave her notice of his often conversing with a religious Friar, who albeit he was a fat and corpulent man, yet notwithstanding, because he seemed to leade a sanctimonious life, and was reported to be a most honest man, she perswaded her selfe, that he might be the best meanes betweene her and her friend.

Having considered with her selfe, what course was best to be observed in this case; uppon a day apt and convenient, she went to the Convent where he kept, and having caused him to be called, shee told him, that if his leysure so served, very gladly would she be confessed, and onely had made her choice of him. The holy man seeing her to be a Gentlewoman (as indeed she was) willingly heard her; and when she had confessed what she could, she had yet another matter to acquaint him withall, and thereupon thus she began.

Holy Father, it is no more then convenient that I should have recourse to you, to be assisted by your helpe and counsell, in a matter which I will impart unto you. I know, that you are not ignorant of my parents and husband, of whom I am affected as deerely as his life, for proofe whereof, there is not any thing that I can desire, but immediately I have it of him, he being a most rich man, and may very sufficiently afford it. In regard whereof, I love him equally as my selfe, and (setting aside my best endevours for him) I must tell you one thing quite contrary to his liking and honour: no woman could more worthily deserve death, then my selfe. Understand then (good Father) that there is a man, whose name I know not, but he seemeth to be honest, and of good worth; moreover (if I am not deceived) he resorteth oftentimes to you, being faire and comely of person, going alwayes in blacke garments of good price and value. This man, imagining (perhaps) no such minde in mee, as truely there is; hath often attempted mee, and never can I be at my doore, or window, but hee is alwayes present in my sight, which is not a little displeasing to me; he watcheth my walks, and much I mervaile, that he is not now heere.



Let me tell you holy Sir, that such behaviours doe many times lay bad imputations upon very honest women, yet without any offence in them. It hath often run in my mind, to let him have knowledge thereof by my brethren: but afterward I considered, that men (many times) deliver messages in such sort, as draw on very ungentle answers, whereon grow words, and words beget actions. In which regard, because no harme or scandall should ensue, I thought it best to be silent; determining, to acquaint you rather therewith, then to any other, as wel because you seem to be his friend, as also in regard of your office, which priviledgeth you to correct such abuses, not onely in friends, but also in strangers. Enow other women there are, (more is the pitty) who perhaps are better disposed to such suites then I am, and can both like and allow of such courting, otherwise then I can doe; as being willing to embrace such offers, and (happily) loath to yeeld deniall. Wherefore, most humbly I entreate you good Father (even for our blessed Ladies sake) that you would give him a friendly reprehension, and advise him to use such unmanly meanes no more heereafter. With which words, she hung downe her head in her bosome, cunningly dissembling, as if shee wept, wiping her eyes with her Handkerchife, when not a teare fel from them, but indeed were dry enough.

The holy Religious man, so soone as he heard her description of the man, presently knew whom shee meant, and highly commending the Gentlewoman for her good and vertuous seeming disposition, beleeved faithfully all that shee had said: promising her, to order the matter so well and discreetly, as shee should not any more bee offended. And knowing her to be a woman of great wealth (after all their usuall manner, when they cast forth their fishing nets for gaine:) liberally he commeuned Almesdeeds, and dayly workes of Charity, recounting to her beside his owne particular necessities. Then, giving him two peeces of Gold, she said: I pray you (good Father) to be mindfull of me, and if he chance to make any deniall, tell him, that I spake it my selfe to you, and by the way of a sad complaint her confession being ended, and penance easie enough enjoyned her, she promised to make her parents bountifull Benefactors to the Convent, and put more money into his hand, desiring him in his Masses, to remember the soules of her deceased friends, and so returned home to her house.

Within a short while after her departure, the Gentleman, of whome she made this counterfeit complaint, came thither, as was his usuall manner, and having done his duty to the holy Father, they sate downe together privately, falling out of one discourse into another. At the length, the Friar (in very loving and friendly sort) mildly reproved him for such amorous glaunces, and other pursuites, which (as he thought) he dayly used to the Gentlewoman, according to her owne speeches. The Gentleman mervailed greatly thereat, as one that had never seene her, and very sildome passed by the way where shee dwelt, which made him the bolder in his answeres; wherein the Confessour interrupting him, saide. Never make such admiration at the matter, neyther waste more words in deniall, because they cannot serve thy turne; I tell thee plainely, I heard these words even from her owne selfe, in a very sorowfull and sad complaint. And though (perhaps) heereafter, thou canst very hardly refraine such follies; yet let me tell thee so much of her (and under the seale of absolute assurance) that she is the onely woman of the world, who to my judgement, doth abhorre all such base behaviour. In regard therefore of thine owne honour, as also not to vex and prejudice so vertuous a Gentlewoman, I pray thee refraine such idlenesse henceforward, and suffer her to live in peace.

The Gentleman being a little wiser then his ghostly Father, perceived immediately, the notable pollicy of the Woman. Whereupon, making somewhat bashfull appearance of any error already committed, he said; He would afterward be better advised. So departing from the Friar, hee went on directly, to passe by the house where the Gentlewoman dwelt, and shee stood alwayes ready on her watch, at a little Window, to observe when he would walke that way. And seeing him comming, shee shewed her selfe so joyfull and gracious to him, as he easily understood, whereto the substance of the holy Fathers chiding tended. And from that time forward, he used dayly though in covert manner (to the no litle liking of the Gentlewoman and himselfe) to make his passage thorough that street, under colour of some important occasions there concerning him.

Soone after, it being plainely discerned on either side, that the one was as well contented with these walkes, as the other could be: she desired to enflame him a little further, by a more liberall illustration of her affection towards him, when time and place affoorded convenient opportunity. To the holy Father againe she went, (for she had beene too long from shrift) and kneeling downe at his feete, intended to begin her confession in teares; which the Friar perceiving, sorrowfully demanded of her; what new accident had happened? Holy Father (quoth shee) no novell accident, but only your wicked and ungracious friend, by whom (since I was heere with you, yea, no longer agoe then yesterday) I have been so wronged, as I verily beleeve that he was borne to bee my mortall enemy, and to make me do somthing to my utter disgrace for ever; and whereby I shall not dare to be seene any more of you my deare Father. How is this? answered the Friar, hath he not refrained from afflicting you so abusively?

Pausing a while, and breathing foorth many a dissembled sighe, thus shee replyed. No truely, holy Father, there is no likelyhood of his abstaining; for since I made my complaint to you, he belike taking it in evil part, to bee contraried in his wanton humours, hath (meerely in despight) walked seaven times in a day by my doore, whereas formerly he never used it above once or twice. And well were it (good Father) if he could be contented with those walkes, and gazing glances which hee dartes at me: but growne he is so bolde and shamelesse, that even yesterday, (as I tolde you) hee sent a woman to me, one of his Pandoraes, as it appeared, and as if I had wanted either Purses or Girdles, hee sent me by her, a Purse and a Girdle. Whereat I grew so greevously offended, as had it not bene for my due respect and feare of God, and next the sacred reverence I beare to you my ghostly Father, doubtlesse I had done some wicked deede. Neverthelesse, happily I withstood it, and wil neither say or do any thing in this case, till first I have made it knowne to you.

Then I called to minde, that having redelivered the Purse and Girdle to his shee-Messenger, which brought them with lookes sufficient to declare my discontentment: I called her backe againe, fearing least she would keep them to her selfe, and make him beleeve that I had received them (as I have heard such kinde of women use to do sometimes) and in anger I snatcht them from her, and have brought them you, to the end, that you may give him them againe; and tell him, I have no need of any such things, thankes be to heaven and my husband, as no woman can be better stored then I am. Wherefore good Father, purposely am I now come to you, to let him know, that if he will not abstaine from thus molesting me, I will disclose it to my Husband, Father, and Brethren, whatsoever befall. For I had rather he should receive the injury, then I to be causelessly blamed for him; wherein good Father tell me, if I dooe not well. With many counterfet sobbes, sighes, and teares these words were delivered; and drawing foorth from under her gowne, a very faire and rich purse, as also a Girdle of great worth, she threw them into the Friars lappe.

He verily beleeving all this false report, being troubled in his minde thereat beyond measure, tooke the Gentlewoman by the hand, saying: Daughter, if thou be offended at these impudent follies, assuredly I cannot blame thee, nor will any wiseman reproove thee for it; and I commend thee for following my counsell. But let me alone for schooling of my Gentleman, ill hath he kept his promise made to me; wherefore, in regard of his former offence, as also this other so lately committed, I hope to set him in such a heate, as shall make him leave off from further injurying thee. Suffer not thy selfe to be conquerd by choller, in disclosing this to thy kindred or husband, because too much harme may ensue thereon. But feare not any wrong to thy selfe; for I am a true witnesse of thine honesty and vertue.

Now began she to seeme better comforted, and forbearing to play on this string any longer, as well knowing the covetousnes of him and his equals, she said: Holy Father, some few nights past, me thought in my sleepe, that divers spirits of my kindred appeared to me in a vision, who me thought were in very great pains, and desired nothing els but Almes; especially my Godmother, who seemed to be afflicted with such extrem poverty, that it was most pittifull to behold. And I am halfe perswaded, that her torments are the greater, seeing me troubled with such an enemy to goodnesse. Wherefore (good Father) to deliver her soule and the others out of those fearfull flames, among your infinite other devout prayers, I would have you to say the forty Masses of S. Gregory, as a means for their happy deliverance, and so she put ten ducates into his hand. Which the holy man accepted thankfully, and with good words, as also many singular examples, confirmed her bountifull devotion: and when he had given her his benediction, home she departed.

After that the Gentlewoman was gone, hee sent for his friend whom she so much seemed to be troubled withall; and when he was come, hee beholding his Holy Father to looke discontentedly, thought, that now he should heare some newes from his Mistresse, and therefore expected what he would say. The Friar, falling into the course of his former reprehensions, but yet in more rough and impatient manner, sharpely checkt him for his immodest behaviour towards the Gentlewoman, in sending her the Purse and Girdle. The Gentleman, who as yet could not guesse whereto his speeches tended; somewhat coldly and temperately, denied the sending of such tokens to her, to the end that he would not bee utterly discredited with the good man, if so bee the Gentlewoman had shewne him any such things. But then the Frier, waxing much more angry, sternly said. Bad man as thou art, how canst thou deny a manifest truth? See sir, these are none of your amorous tokens? No, I am sure you doe not know them, nor ever saw them till now.

The Gentleman, seeming as if he were much ashamed, saide. Truely Father I do know them, and confesse that I have done ill, and very greatly offended: but now I will sweare unto you, seeing I understand how firmely she is affected, that you shall never heare any more complaint of me. Such were his vowes and protestations, as in the end the ghostly Father gave him both the Purse and Girdle: then after he had preached, and severely conjured him, never more to vexe her with any gifts at all, and he binding himselfe thereto by a solemne promise, he gave him license to depart. Now grew the Gentleman very jocond, being so surely certifyed of his Mistresses love, and by tokens of such worthy esteeme; wherefore no sooner was he gone from the Frier, but he went into such a secret place, where he could let her behold at her Window, what precious tokens he had received from her, whereof she was extraordinarily joyfull, because her devices grew still better and better; nothing now wanting, but her husbands absence, upon some journey from the City, for the full effecting of her desire.

Within a few dayes after, such an occasion hapned, as her husband of necessity must journey to Geneway; and no sooner was he mounted on horsebacke, taking leave of her and all his friends: but she, being sure he was gone, went in all hast to her Ghostly Father; and, after a few faigned outward shewes, thus she spake. I must now plainely tell you, holy Father, that I can no longer endure this wicked friend of yours; but because I promised you the other day, that I would not do any thing, before I had your counsell therein, I am now come to tell you, the just reason of my anger, and full purpose to avoid all further mollestation.

Your friend I cannot terme him, but (questionlesse) a very divell of hell: this morning, before the breake of day, having heard (but how, I know not) that my husband was ridden to Geneway: got over the wall into my Garden, and climbing up a tree which standeth close before my Chamber window, when I was fast asleepe, opened the Casement, and would have entred in at the window. But, by great good fortune, I awaked, and made shew of an open outcry: but that he entreated me, both for Gods sake and yours, to pardon him this error, and never after he would presume any more to offend me. When he saw, that (for your sake) I was silent, he closed fast the window againe, departed as he came, and since I never saw him, or heard any tidings of him. Now judge you, holy Father, whether these be honest courses, or no, and to be endured by any civill Gentlewoman; neither would I so patiently have suffered this, but onely in my dutifull reverence to you.

The Ghostly Father hearing this, became the sorrowfullest man in the world, not knowing how to make her any answere, but only demanded of her divers times, whether she knew him so perfectly, that she did not mistake him for some other? Quoth she, I would I did not know him from any other. Alas deere daughter (replied the Frier) what can more be sayd in this case, but that it was over-much boldnesse, and very ill done, and thou shewedst thy selfe a worthy wise woman, in sending him away so mercifully, as thou didst. Once more I would entreat thee (deere and vertuous daughter) seeing grace hath hitherto kept thee from dishonor, and twice already thou hast credited my counsell, let me now advise thee this last time. Spare speech, or complaining to any other of thy friends, and leave it to me, to try if I can overcome this unchained divell, whom I tooke to be a much more holy man. If I can recall him from this sensuall appetite, I shall account my labour well employed; but if I cannot do it, henceforward (with my blessed benediction) I give thee leave to do, even what thy heart will best tutor thee to. You see Sir (said shee) what manner of man he is, yet would I not have you troubled or disobeyed, only I desire to live without disturbance, which worke (I beseech you) as best you may: for I promise you, good Father, never to solicite you more uppon this occasion: And so, in a pretended rage, she returned backe from the ghostly Father.

Scarsely was she gone forth of the Church, but in commeth the man that had (supposedly) so much transgressed; and the Fryer taking him aside, gave him the most injurious words that could be used to a man, calling him disloyall, perjured, and a traitor. He who had formerly twice perceived, how high the holy mans anger mounted, did nothing but expect what he would say; and, like a man extreamly perplexed, strove how to get it from him, saying; Holy Father, how come you to be so heinously offended? What have I done to incense you so strangely? Heare me dishonest wretch answered the Frier, listen what I shall say unto thee. Thou answerest me, as if it were a yeare or two past, since so foule abuses were by thee committed, and they almost quite out of thy remembrance. But tell me wicked man; where wast thou this morning, before breake of the day? Wheresoever I was, replyed the Gentleman, mee thinkes the tidings come very quickly to you. It is true, said the Frier, they are speedily come to me indeed, and upon urgent necessity.

After a little curbing in of his wrath, somewhat in a milder straine, thus he proceeded. Because the Gentlewomans husband is journeyed to Geneway, proves this a ladder to your hope, that to embrace her in your armes, you must climbe over the Garden wall, like a treacherous robber in the night season, mount up a tree before her Chamber window, open the Casement, as hoping to compasse that by importunity, which her spotlesse chastity will never permit. There is nothing in the world, that possibly she can hate more then you, and yet you will love her whether [she] will or no. Many demonstrations her selfe hath made to you, how retrograde you are to any good conceit of her, and my loving admonishments might have had better successe in you, then as yet they shew of outward apparance. But one thing I must tell you, her silent sufferance of your injuries all this while, hath not bin in any respect of you, but at my earnest entreaties, and for my sake. But now she will be patient no longer, and I have given her free license, if ever heereafter you offer to attempt her any more, to make her complaint before her Brethren, which will redound to your no meane danger.

The Gentleman, having wisely collected his Love-lesson out of the Holy Fathers angry words, pacified the good old man so well as he could with very solemne promises and protestations, that he should heare (no more) any misbehaviour of his. And being gone from him, followed the instructions given in her complaint, by climbing over the Garden Wall, ascending the Tree, and entering at the Casement, standing ready open to welcome him. Thus the Friers simplicity, wrought on by her most ingenious subtiltie, made way to obtaine both their longing desires.

THE FOURTH NOVELL

WHEREIN IS DECLARED, WHAT CRAFT AND SUBTILTY SOME WILY WITS CAN DEVISE, TO DECEIVE THE SIMPLE, AND COMPASSE THEIR OWNE DESIRES.

A YONG *Scholler, named Felice, enstructed Puccio di Rinieri, how to become rich in a very short time. While Puccio made experience of the instructions taught him; Felice obtained the favour of his Daughter.*

AFTER that Philomena had finished her Tale, she sate still; and Dioneus (with faire and pleasing Language) commended the Gentlewomans quaint cunning, but smiling at the Confessors witlesse simplicity. Then the Queene, turning with chearefull looks toward Pamphilus, commaunded him to continue on their delight; who gladly yeelded, and thus began. Madame, many men there are, who while they strive to climbe from a good estate, to a seeming better; doe become in much worse condition then they were before. As happened to a neighbour of ours, and no long time since, as the accident will better acquaint you withall.

According as I have heard it reported, neere to Saint Brancazio, there dwelt an honest man, and some-what rich, who was called Puccio di Rinieri, and who addicted all his paines and endeavours to Alchimy: wherefore, he kept no other family, but onely a widdowed daughter, and a servant; and because he had no other Art or exercise, he used often to frequent the market place. And in regard he was but a weake witted man and a gourmand or grosse feeder; his language was the more harsh and rude; like to our common Porters or sottish men, and his carriage also absurd, boore-like, and clownish. His daughter, being named Monna Isabetta, aged not above eight and twenty, or thirty yeeres; was a fresh indifferent faire, plumpe, round woman, cherry cheekt, like a Queene-Apple; and, to please her Father, fed not so sparingly, as otherwise she would have done, but when she communed or jested with any body, she would talke of nothing, but onely concerning the great vertue in Alchimy, extolling it above all other Arts.

Much about this season of the yeare, there returned a young Scholler from Paris, named Felice, faire of complexion, comely of person, ingeniously witted, and skilfully learned, who (soone after) grew into familiarity, with Puccio: now because he could resolve him in many doubts, depending on his profession of Alchimy, (himselfe having onely practise, but no great learning) he used many questions to him, shewed him very especiall matters of secrecy, entertaining him often to dinners and suppers, whensoever he pleased to come and converse with him; and his daughter likewise, perceiving with what favour her Father respected him, became the more familiar with him, allowing him good regard and reverence.

The young man continuing his resort to the House of Puccio, and observing the widdow to be faire, fresh, and prettily formall; he began to consider with himselfe, what those things might be, wherein she was most wanting; and (if he could) to save anothers labour, supply them by his best endeavours. Thus not alwayes carrying his eyes before him, but using many backe and circumspect regards, he proceeded so farre in his wylie apprehensions, that (by a few sparkes close kept together) he kindled part of the same fire in her, which began to flame apparantly in him. And hee very wittily observing the same, as occasion first smiled on him, and allowed him favourable opportunity, so did hee impart his intention to her.

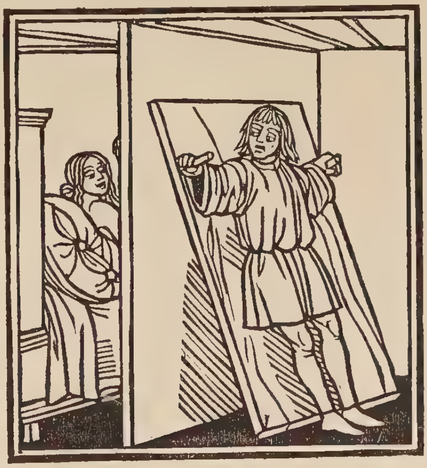
Now albeit he found her plyant enough, to gaine physicke for her owne griefe, as soone as his; yet the meanes and manner were (as yet) quite out of all apprehension. For shee in no other part of the World, would trust her selfe in the young mans company, but onely in her Fathers house; and that was a place out of all possibility, because Puccio (by a long continued custome) used to watch well-neere all the night, as commonly he did, each night after other, never stirring foorth of the roomes, which much abated the edge of the young mans appetite. After infinite intricate revolvings, wheeling about his busied braine, he thought it not altogether an Herculian taske, to enjoy his happinesse in the house, and without any suspition, albeit Puccio kept still within doores, and watched as hee was wont to doe.

Upon a day as he sate in familiar conference with Puccio, he began to speake unto him in this manner; I have many times noted, kinde friend Puccio, that all thy desire and endeavour is, by what meanes thou mayst become very rich, wherein (me thinkes) thou takest too wide a course, when there is a much neerer and shorter way, which Mighell Scotus, and other his associates, very diligently observed and followed, yet were never willing to instruct other men therein; whereby the mysterie might bee drowned in oblivion, and prosecuted by none but onely great Lords, that are able to undergoe it. But because thou art mine especiall friend, and I have received from thee infinite kind favours; whereas I never intended, that any man (by me) should be acquainted with so rare a secret; if thou wilt imitate the course as I shall shew thee, I purpose to teach it thee in full perfection. Puccio being very earnestly desirous to understand the speediest way to so singular a mysterie, first began to entreat him (with no meane instance) to acquaint him with the rules of so rich a Science; and afterward sware unto him, never to disclose it to any person, except hee gave his consent thereto; affirming beside, that it was a rarity, not easie to bee comprehended by very apprehensive judgements. Well (quoth Felice) seeing thou hast made me such a sound and solemne promise, I will make it knowne unto thee.

Know then friend Puccio, the Philosophers do hold, that such as covet to become rich indeed, must understand how to make the Stone: as I will tell thee how, but marke the manner very heedfully. I do not say, that after the Stone is obtained, thou shalt bee even as rich as now thou art; but thou shalt plainly perceive, that the very grosest substances, which hitherto thou hast seene, all of them shalbe made pure golde: and such as afterward thou makest, shall be more certaine, then to go or come with *Aqua fortis,* as now they do. Most expedient is it therefore, that when a man will go diligently about this businesse, and purposeth to prosecute such a singular labour, which will and must continue for the space of 40 nights, he must give very carefull attendance, wholly abstaining from sleepe, slumbering, or so much as nodding all that while.

Moreover, in some apt and convenient place of thy house, there must be a forge or furnace erected, framed in decent and formall fashion, and neere it a large table placed, ordered in such sort, as standing upright on thy feete, and leaning the reines of thy backe against it; thou must stande stedfastly in that manner every night, without the least motion or stirring, untill the breake of day appeareth, and thine eyes still uppon the Furnace fixed, to keepe ever in memory, the true order which I have prescribed. So soone as the morning is seene, thou mayest (if thou wilt) walke, or rest a little upon thy bed, and afterward go about thy businesse, if thou have any. Then go to dinner, attending readily till the evenings approch, preparing such things as I will readily set thee downe in writing, without which there is not any thing to bee done; and then returne to the same taske againe, not varying a jot from the course directed. Before the time be fully expired, thou shalt perceive many apparant signes, that the stone is still in absolute forwardnesse, but it will bee utterly lost if thou fayle in the least of all the observances. And when the experience hath crowned thy labour, thou art sure to have the Philosophers stone, and thereby shalt be able to enrich all, and worke wonders beside.

Puccio instantly replyed. Now trust me Sir, there is no great difficultie in this labour, neither doth it require any extraordinary length of time: but it may very easily be followed and performed, and (by your friendly favor, in helping to direct the Furnace and Table, according as you imagine most convenient) on Sunday at night next, I will begin my taske.



The place which Puccio had chosen, for his hopefull attaining to the Philosophers

Stone, was close to the Chamber where his daughter lay having no other separation or division, but an old ruinous tottring wall. So that, when the Scholler was playing his prize, Puccio heard an unwonted noise in the house, which he had never observed before, neither knew the wall to have any such motion: wherefore, not daring to stirre from his standing, least all should be marrd in the very beginning, he called to his daughter, demanding, what busie labour she was about? The widdow, being much addicted to frumping, according as questions were demanded of her, and (perhaps) forgetting who spake to her, pleasantly replied: Whoop Sir, where are we now? Are the Spirits of Alchimy walking in the house, that we cannot lye quietly in our beds?

Puccio mervailing at this answere, knowing she never gave him the like before; demanded againe, what she did? The subtle wench, remembring that she had not answered as became her, said: Pardon mee Father, my wits were not mine owne, when you demanded such a sodaine question; and I have heard you say an hundred times, that when folke go supperles to bed, either they walke in their sleepe, or being awake, talke very idely, as (no doubt) you have discern'd by me. Nay daughter (quoth he) it may be, that I was in a waking dreame, and thought I heard the olde wall totter: but I see I was deceived, for now it is quiet and still enough. Talke no more good Father, saide she, least you stirre from your place, and hinder your labour: take no care for mee, I am able enough to have care of my selfe.

To prevent any more of these nightly disturbances, they went to lodge in another part of the house, where they continued out the time of Puccioes paines, with equall contentment to them both, which made her divers times say to Felice: You teach my father the cheefe grounds of Alchimy, while we helpe to waste away his treasure. Thus the Scholler being but poore, yet well forwarded in Learning, made use of Puccioes folly, and found benefit thereby, to keepe him out of wants, which is the bane and overthrow of numberlesse good wits. And Puccio dying, before the date of his limited time, because he failed of the Philosophers Stone, Isabetta joyned in marriage with Felice, to make him amends for instructing her father, by which meanes he came to be her husband.

THE FIFTH NOVELL

WHEREIN IS DESCRIBED THE FRAILETY OF SOME WOMEN, AND FOLLY OF SUCH HUSBANDS, AS LEAVE THEM ALONE TO THEIR OWNE DISPOSITION.

RICCIARDO *surnamed the Magnifico, gave a Horse to Signior Francesco Vergillisi, on condition that he might speake to his wife in his presence; which he did, and she not returning him any answer, made answer to himselfe on her behalfe, and according to his answer, so the effect followed.*

PAMPHILUS having ended his novell of Puccio the Alchimist, the Queene fixing her eye on Madam Eliza, gave order, that shee should succeed. She looking somewhat more austerely then any of the rest not in any spleen, but as it was her usuall manner, thus began. The world containeth some particular people, who beleeve (because they know something) that others are ignorant in all things, who for the most part, while they intend to make a scorne of other men, upon triall, finde themselves to carry away the scorne. Therefore, I account it no meane folly in them, who (upon no occasion) wil tempt the power of another mans wit or experience. But because all men and women are not of my opinion; I meane that you shall perceive it more apparantly, by an accident happening to a Knight of Pistoia, as you shall heare by me related.

In the Town of Pistoia, bordering upon Florence, there lived not long since, a Knight named Signieur Francesco, descended of the linage or family of the Vergellisi, a man very rich, wise, and in many things provident, but gripple, covetous, and too close handed, without respect to his worth and reputation. He being called to the Office of Podesta in the City of Millaine, furnished himselfe with all things (in honourable manner) beseeming such a charge; onely, a comely horse for his owne saddle excepted, which he knew not by any meanes how to compasse, so loath hee was to lay out money, albeit his credit much depended thereon.

At the same time, there lived in Pistoya likewise, a young man, named Ricciardo, derived of meane birth, but very wealthy, quicke witted, and of commendable person, alwayes going so neate, fine, and formall in his apparrell, that he was generally tearmed the Magnifico, who had long time affected, yea, and closely courted, (though without any advantage or successe) the Lady and wife of Signior Francesco, who was very beautifull, vertuous, and chaste. It so chanced, that this Magnifico had the very choisest and goodliest ambling Gelding in all Tuscany, which hee loved dearely, for his faire forme, and other good parts. Upon a flying rumor throughout Pistoia, that he daily made love to the foresaid Ladie, some busie-body put it into the head of Signior Francesco, that if he pleased to request the Gelding, the Magnifico would frankely give it him, in regard of the love he bare to his wife.

The base-minded Knight, coveting to have the Horse, and yet not to part with any money, sent for the Magnifico, desiring to buy his fayre Gelding of him, because he hoped to have him of free gift. The Magnifico hearing this request, was very joyfull, and thus answered; Sir, if you would give me all the wealth which you possesse in this world, I wil not sell you my horse, rather I wil bestow him on you as a Gentlemans gift: but yet upon this condition, that before you have him delivered, I may with your license, and in your presence speake a few words to your vertuous Ladie, and so farre off in distance from you, as I may not be heard by any, but onely her selfe. Signior Francesco, wholly conducted by his base avaricious desire, and meaning to make a scorne at the Magnifico, made answer, that he was well contented to let him speak with her when he would; and leaving him in the great Hall of the house, went to his wives Chamber, and told her how easily he might enjoy the horse, commanding her forthwith to come and heare what he could say to her, only she should abstaine, and not returne him any answer. The Lady with a modest blush, much condemned this folly in him, that his covetousnes should serve as a cloake to cover any unfitting speeches which her chaste eares could never endure to heare. Neverthelesse being to obey her husbands will, she promised to do it, and followed him down into the Hall, to heare what the Magnifico would say. Againe he there confirmed the bargaine made with her husband, and sitting downe by her in a corner of the Hall, farre enough off from any ones hearing, taking her curteously by the hand, thus he spake.

Worthy Lady, it seemeth to me, that you are so truly wise, as no doubt you have long since perceived, what unfeigned affection your beauty (far excelling) hath compelled me to beare you. Setting aside those commendable qualities and singular vertues gloriously shining in you, and powerfull enough to make a conquest of the stoutest courage, I held it utterly needlesse, to let you understand by words, how faithfull the love is I bear you, were it not much more fervent and constant, then ever any other man can expresse to a woman. In which condition it shall still continue, without the least blemish or impayre, so long as I enjoy life or motion; yea, and I dare assure you, that if in the future world, affection may containe the same powerfull dominion, as it doth in this; I am the man borne to love you perpetually. Whereby you may rest confidently perswaded, that you enjoy not any thing, how poore or precious soever it be, which you can so solemnely account to be your owne, and in the truest title of right, as you may my selfe, in all that I have, or for ever shall be mine.

To confirme your opinion in this case by any argument of greater power, let me tell you, that I should repute it as my fairest and most gracious fortune, if you would command me some such service, as consisteth in mine ability to performe, and in your courteous favour to accept, yea, if it were to travaile thorow the whole world, right willing am I, and obedient. In which regard faire Madam, if I be so much yours, as you heare I am, I may boldly adventure (and not without good reason) to acquaint your chaste eares with my earnest desires, for on you onely depends my happinesse, life, and absolute comfort, and as your most humble servant, I beseech you (my deerest good, and sole hope of my soule) that rigour may dwell no longer in your gentle brest, but Lady-like pitty and compassion, whereby I shall say, that as your divine beauty enflamed mine affections, even so it extended such a merciful qualification, as exceeded all my hope, but not the halfe part of your pitty.

Admit (myracle of Ladies) that I should die in this distresse: Alas, my death would be but your dishonour; I cannot be termed mine owne murtherer, when the Dart came from your eye that did it, and must remaine a witnes of your rigor. You cannot then chuse but call to minde, and say within your own soule: Alas, what a sinne have I committed, in being so unmercifull to my Magnifico. Repentance then serves to no purpose, but you must answer for such unkinde cruelty. Wherefore, to prevent so blacke a scandall to your bright beauty, beside the ceaselesse acclamations, which will dog your walkes in the day time, and breake your quiet sleepes in the night season, with fearefull sights and gastly apparitions, hovering and haunting about your bed; let all these moove you to milde mercy, and spill not life, when you may save it.

So the Magnifico ceasing, with teares streaming from his eyes, and sighes breaking from his heart, hee sate still in expectation of the Ladies answere, who made neither long or short of the matter, neither Tilts nor Tourneying, nor many lost mornings and evenings, nor infinite other such like Offices, which the Magnifico (for her sake) from time to time had spent in vaine, without the least shew of acceptation, or any hope at all to winne her love: mooved now in this very houre, by these solemne protestations, or rather most prevailing asseverations, she began to finde that in her, which (before) she never felt, namely Love. And although (to keepe her promise made to her husband) shee spake not a word: yet her heart heaving, her soule throbbing, sighes intermixing, and complexion altering, could not hide her intended answer to the Magnifico, if promise had beene no hinderance to her will. All this while the Magnifico sate as mute as she, and seeing she would not give him any answere at all, he could not choose but wonder thereat, yet at length perceived, that it was thus cunningly contrived by her husband. Notwithstanding, observing well her countenance, that it was in a quite contrary temper, another kinde of fire sparkling in her eye, other humours flowing, her pulses strongly beating, her stomacke rising, and sighes swelling, all these were arguments of a change, and motives to advance his hope. Taking courage by this ticklish perswasion, and instructing his mind with a new kinde of counsell; he would needes answer himselfe on her behalfe, and as if she had uttered the words, thus he spake.

Magnifico, and my friend, surely it is a long time since, when I first noted thine affection toward me to be very great and most perfect, but now I am much more certain thereof, by thine owne honest and gentle speeches, which content me as they ought to do. Neverthelesse, if heretofore I have seemed cruell and unkinde to thee, I would not have thee thinke, that my heart was any way guilty of my outward severity, but did evermore love thee, and held thee deerer then any man living. But yet it became me to do so, as well in feare of others, as for the renowne of mine owne reputation. But now is the time at hand, to let thee knowe more clearly, whether I do affect thee or no: as a just guerdon of thy constant love which long thou hast, and still doest beare to me. Wherefore, comfort thy selfe, and dwell on this undoubted hope, because Signior Francesco my husband, is to be absent hence for many dayes, beeing chosen Podesta at Millaine, as thou canst not choose but heare, for it is common through the Country.

I know (for my sake) thou hast given him thy goodly ambling Gelding, and so soone as he is gone, I promise thee upon my word, and by the faithfull love I beare thee; that I will have further conference with thee, and let thee understand somewhat more of my minde. And because this is neither fitting time nor place, to discourse on matters of such serious moment: observe heereafter, as a signall, when thou seest my Crimson Skarfe hanging in the window of my Chamber, which is upon the Garden side, that evening (so soone as it is night) come to the Garden gate, with wary respect that no eye do discover thee, and there thou shalt finde me walking, and ready to acquaint thee with other matters, according as I shall finde occasion.

When the Magnifico in the person of the Lady, had spoken thus, then he returned her this answer. Most vertuous Lady, my spirits are so transported with extraordinary joy, for this your gracious and welcome answer, that my sences faile me, and all my faculties quite forsake me, that I cannot give you such thankes as I would. And if I could speak equally to my desire, yet the season suites not therewith, neither were it convenient that I should be so troublesome to you. Let me therefore humbly beseech you, that the desire I have to accomplish your will (which wordes availe not to expresse) may remaine in your kinde consideration. And as you have commanded me, so will I not faile to performe it accordingly, and in more thankfull manner, then (as yet) I am able to let you know. Now there resteth nothing else to do, but under the protection of your gracious pardon, I to give over speech, and you to attend your woorthy Husband.

Notwithstanding all that hee had spoken, yet shee replyed not one word; wherefore the Magnifico arose, and returned to the Knight, who went to meete him, saying in a lowd laughter. How now man? Have I not kept my promise with thee? No Sir, answered the Magnifico, for you promised I should speake with your wife, and you have made mee talke to a marble Statue. This answere, was greatly pleasing to the Knight, who, although hee had an undoubted opinion of his wife; yet this did much more strengthen his beliefe, and hee said. Now thou confessest thy Gelding to bee mine? I doe, replied the Magnifico, but if I had thought, that no better successe would have ensued on the bargaine; without your motion for the horse, I would have given him you: and I am sorie that I did not, because now you have bought my horse, and yet I have not sold him. The Knight laughed heartily at this answer, and being thus provided of so faire a beast, hee rode on his journey to Millaine, and there entred into his authority of Podesta.

The Lady remained now in liberty at home, considering on the Magnificoes words, and likewise the Gelding, which (for her sake) was given to her husband. Oftentimes shee saw him passe too and fro before her windowe, still looking when the Flagge of defiance should be hanged forth, that hee might fight valiantly under her Colours. The Story saith, that among many of her much better meditations, shee was heard to talke thus idely to her selfe. What doe I meane? Wherefore is my youth? The olde miserable man is gone to Millaine, and God knoweth when hee comes backe againe, ever, or never. Is dignity preferred before wedlockes holy duty, and pleasures abroade, more then comforts at home? Ill can age pay youths arrerages, when time is spent, and no hope sparde. Actions omitted, are oftentimes repented, but done in due season, they are sildome sorrowed for. Upon these un-Lady-like private consultations, whether the window shewed the signall or no; it is no matter belonging to my charge: I say, husbands are unwise, to graunt such ill advantages, and wives much worse, if they take hold of them, onely judge you the best, and so the Tale is ended.

THE SIXTH NOVELL

DECLARING, HOW MUCH PERSEVERANCE, AND A COURAGIOUS SPIRIT IS AVAILABLE IN LOVE.

RICCIARDO *Minutolo fell in love with the wife of Philippello Fighinolfi, and knowing her to be very jealous of her Husband, gave her to understand, that hee was greatly enamoured of his Wife, and had appointed to meete her privately in a Bathing house, on the next day following: where shee hoping to take him tardie with his close compacted Mistresse, found her selfe to be deceived by the said Ricciardo.*

No more remained to be spoken by Madame Eliza, but the cunning of the Magnifico, being much commended by all the company: the Queene commanded Madame Fiammetta, to succede next in order with one of her Novels, who (smiling) made answer that shee would, and began thus. Gracious Ladies, mee thinkes wee have spoken enough already, concerning our owne Citie, which as it aboundeth copiously in all commodities, so is it an example also to every convenient purpose. And as Madam Eliza hath done, by recounting occasions happening in another World, so must we now leape a little further off, even so far as Naples, to see how one of those Saint-like Dames that nicely seemes to shun loves allurings, was guided by the good spirit to a friend of hers, and tasted of the fruite, before she knew the flowers. A sufficient warning for you to apprehend before hand what may follow after, and to let you see beside, that when an error is committed, how to bee discreete in keeping it from publike knowledge.

In the Citie of Naples, it being of great antiquity, and (perhaps) as pleasantly situated, as any other City in all Italy, there dwelt sometime a yong Gentleman, of noble parentage, and well knowne to bee wealthy, named Ricciardo Minutolo, who although hee had a Gentlewoman of excellent beuty, and worthy the verie kindest affecting to his wife; yet his gadding eye gazed elsewhere, and he became enamored of another, which (in generall opinion) surpassed all the Neapolitane Women else, in feature, favour, and the choysest perfections, shee being named Madam Catulla wife to as gallant a young Gentleman, called Philippello Fighinolfi, who most dearly he loved beyond all other, for her vertue and admired chastity.

Ricciardo loving this Madam Catulla, and using all such means whereby the grace and liking of a Lady might be obtained; found it yet a matter beyond possibility, to compasse the height of his desire: so that many desperate and dangerous resolutions beleagred his braine, seeming so intricate and unlikely to affoord any hopefull yssue, as hee wished for nothing more then death.

And death (as yet) being deafe to all his earnest imprecations, delayed him on in lingering afflictions: and continuing still in such an extreame condition, he was advised by some of his best friends, utterly to abstaine from this fond pursuit, because his hopes were meerely in vaine, and Madam Catulla prized nothing more precious to her in the World, then unstayned loyaltie to her Husband: and yet shee lived in such extreame jealousie of him, as fearing least some bird flying in the ayre should snatch him from her.

Ricciardo not unacquainted with this her jealous humour, as well by credible hearing thereof, as also by daily observation, began to consider with himselfe, that it were best for him, to dissemble amorous affection in some other place, and (henceforward) to set aside all hope, of ever enjoying the love of Madam Catulla, because he was now become the servant to another Gentlewoman, pretending (in her honour) to performe many worthy actions of Armes, Joustes, Tournaments, and all such like noble exercises, as he was wont to doe for Madam Catulla. So that most of the people of Naples, but especially Madam Catulla, becam verily perswaded, that his former fruitlesse love to her was quite changed, and the new elected Lady had all the glory of his best endevours, persevering so long in this opinion, as now it passed absolutely for currant. Thus seemed he now as meere a stranger to her, whose house before he familiarly frequented, yet as a neighbour gave her the daies salutations, according as he chanced to see her, or meet her.

It came so to passe, that it being now the delightfull Summer season, when all Gentlemen and Gentlewomen used to meete together (according to a custome long observed in that Country) sporting along on the Sea Coast, dining and supping there very often, Ricciardo Minutolo happened to heare, that Madam Catulla (with a company of her friends) intended also to be present there among them; at which time, consorted with a seemely traine of his confederates, he resorted thither, and was graciously welcommed by Madam Catulla, where he pretended no willing long time of tarrying, but that Catulla and the other Ladies were faine to entreate him, discoursing of his love to his new elected Mistresse: which Minutolo graced with so solemne a countenance, as it ministred much more matter of conference, all coveting to know what she was.

So farre they walked, and held on this kinde of discoursing, as every Lady and Gentlewoman, waxing weary of too long a continued argument, began to separate her selfe with such an associate as shee best liked, and as in such walking women are wont to doe; so that Madam Catulla having few females left with her, stayed behind with Minutolo, who sodainly shot forth a word concerning her husband Philipello, and of his loving another woman beside her selfe. She that was overmuch jealous before, became so sodainely set on fire to know what shee was of whom Minutolo spake, as she sat silent a long while, til being able to containe no longer, shee entreated Ricciardo even for the Ladies sake, whose love he had so devoutly embraced, to resolve her certainly in this strange alteration of her husband; whereunto thus he answered.

Madam, you have so straitly conjured me, by urging the remembrance of her; for whose sake I am not able to deny any thing you can demand, as I am readie therein to pleasure you. But first you must promise me, that neither you, or any other person for you, shall at any time disclose it to your Husband, untill you have seene by effect, that which I have told you proveth to be true: and when you please, I wil instruct you how your selfe shall see it. The Ladie was not a little joyfull to be thus satisfied in her Husbands folly, and constantly crediting his words to be true, shee sware a solemne oath, that no one alive should ever know it. So stepping a little further aside, because no listening eare should heare him, thus he beganne.

Lady, if I did love you now so effectually as heeretofore I have done, I should be very circumspect, in uttering any thing which I immagined might distast you. I know not whether your husband Philipello, were at any time offended, because I affected you, or beleeved that I received any kindnes from you: but whether it were so or no, I could never discerne it by any outward apparance. But now awaiting for the opportunity of time, which he conceived should affoord me the least suspition, he seekes to compasse that, which (I doubt) he feares I would have done to him, in plaine termes Madam, to have his pleasure of my wife. And as by some carriages I have observed, within few daies past he hath solicited and pursued his purpose very secretly, by many Ambassages, and meanes, as (indeed) I have learned from her selfe, and alwaies she hath returned in such answers, as she receyved by my direction.

And no longer ago Madam, then this very morning, before my comming hither, I found a woman-messenger in my house, in very close conference with my Wife, when growing doubtfull of that which was true indeede, I called my Wife, enquiring, what the woman would have with her; and she told me, it was another pursuite of Philipello Fighinolfi, who (quoth shee) upon such answers as you have caused me to send him from time to time, perhappes doth gather some hope of prevailing in the end, which maketh him still to importune me as he doth. And now he adventureth so farre, as to understand my finall intention, having thus ordered his complot, that when I please, I must meet him secretly in a house of this City, where he hath prepared a Bath ready for me, and hopeth to enjoy the end of his desire, as very earnestly he hath solicited me thereto. But if you had not commanded me, to hold him in suspense with so many frivolous answers, I would ere this, have sent him such a message, as should have bene little to his liking.

With patience Madam I endured all before, but now (me thinkes) he proceedeth too farre, which is not any way to be suffered; and therefore I intended to let you know it, that you may perceive, how wel you are rewarded for the faithfull and loyall love you beare him, and for which, I was even at deaths dore. Now, because you may be the surer of my speeches, not to be any lyes or fables, and that you may (if you please) approve the truth by your owne experience, I caused my wife to send him word, that she would meet him to morrow at the Bathing-house appointed, about the houre of noone-day, when people repose themselves in regard of the heates violence; with which answer the woman returned very jocondly. Let me now tell you Lady, I hope you have better opinion of my wit, then any meaning in me, to send my wife thither; I rather did it to this end, that having acquainted you with his treacherous intent, you should supply my wives place, by saving both his reputation and your owne, and frustrating his unkind purpose to me. Moreover, upon the view of his owne delusion, wrought by my wife in meere love to you, he shall see his foule shame, and your most noble care, to keepe the rites of marriage betweene you still unstained.

Madame Catulla, having heard this long and unpleasing report, without any consideration, either what he was that tolde the tale, or what a treason he intended against her: immediately (as jealous persons use to doe) she gave faith to his forgerie, and began to discourse many things to him, which imagination had often misguided her in, against her honest minded husband, and enflamed with rage, suddenly replied; that shee would doe according as he had advised her, as being a matter of no difficulty. But if he came, she would so shame and dishonour him, as no woman whatsoever should better schoole him. Ricciardo highly pleased herewith, and being perswaded, that his purpose would take the full effect: confirmed the Lady in her determination with many words more; yet putting her in memory, to keepe her faithfull promise made, without revealing the matter to any living person, as shee had sworne upon her faith.

On the morrow morning, Ricciardo went to an auncient woman of his acquaintance, who was the Mistresse of a Bathing-house, and there where he had appointed Madame Catulla, that the Bath should bee prepared for her, giving her to understand the whole businesse, and desiring her to be favourable therein to him. The woman, who had beene much beholding to him in other matters, promised very willingly to fulfill his request, concluding with him, both what should be done and said. She had in her house a very darke Chamber, without any window to affoord it the least light, which Chamber she had made ready, according to Ricciardoes direction, with a rich Bed therein, so soft and delicate as possible could bee, wherein he entred so soone as he had dined, to attend the arrivall of Madame Catulla. On the same day, as she had heard the speeches of Ricciardo, and gave more credit to them then became her; shee returned home to her house in wonderfull impatience. And Philippello her husband came home discontentedly too, whose head being busied about some worldly affaires, perhaps he looked not so pleasantly, neither used her so kindly, as he was wont to doe. Which Catulla perceiving, shee was ten times more suspicious then before, saying to her selfe. Now apparent trueth doth disclose it selfe, my husbands head is troubled now with nothing else, but Ricciardoes wife, with whom (to morrow) he purposeth his meeting; wherein he shall be disappointed, if I live; taking no rest at all the whole night, for thinking how to handle her husband.

What shall I say more? On the morrow, at the houre of mid-day accompanied onely with her Chamber-mayde, and without any other alteration in opinion; shee went to the house where the Bath was promised, and meeting there with the olde woman, demaunded of her, if Philippello were come thither as yet or no? The woman, being well instructed by Ricciardo, answered: Are you shee that should meete him heere? Yes, replied Catulla. Goe in then to him (quoth the woman) for he is not farre off before you.

Madame Catulla, who went to seeke that which shee would not finde, being brought vailed into the darke Chamber where Ricciardo was, entred into the Bath, hoping to finde none other there but her husband, and the custome of the Country, never disallowed such meetings of men with their wives, but held them to be good and commendable. In a counterfeit voyce he bad her welcome, and she, not seeming to be any other then shee was indeed, entertained his imbracings in as loving manner; yet not daring to speake, least he should know her, but suffered him to proceede in his owne errour.

Let passe the wanton follies passing betweene them, and come to Madame Catulla, who finding it a fit and convenient time, to vent forth the tempest of her spleene, began in this manner. Alas! how mighty are the misfortunes of women, and how ill requited is all the loyall love of many wives to their husbands? I, a poore miserable Lady, who, for the space of eight yeeres now fully compleated, have loved thee more dearely then mine owne life, finde now (to my hearts endlesse griefe) how thou wastest and consumest thy desires, to delight them with a strange woman, like a most vile and wicked man as thou art. With whom doest thou now imagine thy selfe to be? Thou art with her, whom thou hast long time deluded by false blandishments, feigning to affect her, when thou doatest in thy desires else-where. I am thine owne Catulla, and not the wife of Ricciardo, trayterous and unfaithfull man, as thou art. I am sure thou knowest my voyce, and I thinke it a thousand yeeres, untill wee may see each other in the light, to doe thee such dishonour as thou justly deservest, dogged, disdainfull, and villainous wretch. By conceiving to have another woman in thy wanton embraces, thou hast declared more joviall disposition, and demonstrations of farre greater kindnesse, then domesticke familiarity. At home thou lookest sower, sullen or surly, often froward, and seldome well pleased. But the best is, whereas thou intendest this husbandrie for another mans ground, thou hast (against thy will) bestowed it on thine owne, and the water hath runne a contrary course, quite from the current where thou meantst it.

What answer canst thou make, devill, and no man? What, have my words smitten thee dumbe? Thou mayest (with shame enough) hold thy peace, for with the face of a man, and love of an husband to his wife, thou art not able to make any answere.

Ricciardo durst not speake one word, but still expressed his affable behaviour towards her, bestowing infinite embraces and kisses on her: which so much the more augmented her rage and anger, continuing on her chiding thus. If by these flatteries and idle follies, thou hopest to comfort or pacifie me, thou runnest quite by as from thy reckoning; for I shall never imagine my selfe halfe satisfied, untill in the presence of my parents, friends, and neighbours, I have revealed thy base behaviour. Tell mee, treacherous man, am not I as faire, as the wife of Ricciardo? Am I not as good a Gentlewoman borne, as shee is? What canst thou more respect in her, then is in mee? Villaine, monster, why doest thou not answere mee? I will send to Ricciardo, who loveth mee beyond all other women in Naples, and yet could never vaunt, that I gave him so much as a friendly looke: he shall know, what a dishonour thou hadst intended towards him; which both he and his friends will revenge soundly upon thee.

The exclamations of the Lady were so tedious and irksome, that Ricciardo perceiving, if shee continued longer in these complaints, worse would ensue thereon, then could bee easily remedied: resolved to make himselfe knowne unto her, to reclaime her out of this violent extasie, and holding her somewhat strictly, to prevent her escaping from him, he said. Madam, afflict your selfe no further, for, what I could not obtaine by simply loving you, subtilty hath better taught me, and I am your Ricciardo: which she hearing, and perfectly knowing him by his voyce; shee would have leapt out of the Bath, but shee could not, and to avoyde her crying out, he layde his hand on her mouth, saying. Lady, what is done, cannot now be undone, albeit you cried out all your life time. If you exclaime, or make this knowne openly by any meanes; two unavoydable dangers must needes ensue thereon. The one (which you ought more carefully to respect) is the wounding of your good renowne and honour, because, when you shall say, that by treacherie I drew you hither: I will boldly maintaine the contrary, avouching, that having corrupted you with gold, and not giving you so much as covetously you desired; you grew offended, and thereon made the outcry, and you are not to learne, that the world is more easily induced to beleeve the worst, then any goodnesse, be it never so manifest. Next unto this, mortall hatred must arise betweene your husband and mee, and (perhaps) I shall as soone kill him, as he me; whereby you can hardly live in any true contentment after. Wherefore, joy of my life, doe not in one moment, both shame your selfe, and cause such perill betweene your husband and me: for you are not the first, neither can be the last, that shall be deceived. I have not beguiled you, to take any honour from you, but onely declared, the faithfull affection I beare you, and so shall doe for ever, as being your bounden and most obedient servant; and as it is a long time agoe, since I dedicated my selfe and all mine to your service, so hence-forth must I remaine for ever. You are wise enough (I know) in all other things; then shew your selfe not to be silly or simple in this.

Ricciardo uttered these words, teares streaming aboundantly downe his cheekes, and Madame Catulla (all the while) likewise showred forth her sorrowes equally to his, now, although she was exceedingly troubled in mind, and saw what her owne jealous folly had now brought her to, a shame beyond all other whatsoever: in the middest of her tormenting passions, shee considered on the words of Ricciardo, found good reason in them, in regard of the unavoydable evils, whereupon shee thus spake. Ricciardo, I know not how to beare the horrible injurie, and notorious treason used by thee against me, grace and goodnesse having so forsaken me, to let me fall in so foule a manner. Nor becommeth it me, to make any noyse or out-cry heere, whereto simplicity, or rather devillish jealousie, did conduct me. But certaine I am of one thing, that I shall never see any one joyfull day, till (by one meanes or other) I bee revenged on thee. Thou hast glutted thy desire with my disgrace, let me therefore go from thee, never more to looke upon my wronged husband, or let any honest woman ever see my face.

Ricciardo perceiving the extremity of her perplexed minde, used all manly and milde perswasions, which possibly he could devise to doe, to turne the torrent of this high tide, to a calmer course; as by outward shew shee made appearance of, untill (in frightfull feares shunning every one shee met withall, as arguments of her guiltinesse) shee recovered her owne house, where remorse so tortured her distressed soule, that she fell into so fierce a melancholy, as never left her till shee died. Upon the report whereof, Ricciardo becomming likewise a widdower, and grieving extraordinarily for his haynous transgression, penitently betooke himselfe to live in a wildernesse, where (not long after) he ended his dayes.

THE SEAVENTH NOVELL

WHEREIN IS SIGNIFIED THE POWER OF LOVE, AND THE DIVERSITY OF DANGERS, WHEREINTO MEN MAY DAYLY FALL.

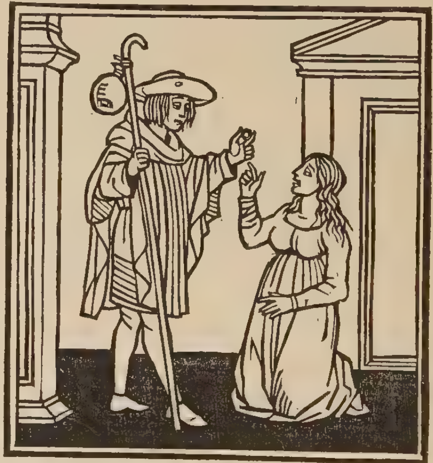
THEOBALDO *Elisei, having received an unkinde repulse by his beloved, departed from Florence, and returning thither (a long while after) in the habite of a Pilgrime; he spake with her, and made his wrongs knowne unto her. He delivered her Father from the danger of death, because it was proved, that he had slaine Theobaldo: he made peace with his brethren, and in the end, wisely enjoyed his hearts desire.*

So ceased Fiammetta her discourse, being generally commended, when the Queene, to prevent the losse of time, commanded Æmillia to follow next, who thus began. It liketh me best (gracious Ladies) to returne home againe to our owne City, which it pleased the former two discoursers to part from: And there I will shew you, how a Citizen of ours, recovered the kindnesse of his Love, after hee had lost it.

Sometime there dwelt in Florence a young Gentleman, named Theobaldo Elisei, descended of a noble House, who became earnestly enamoured of a Widdow, called Hermelina, the daughter to Aldobrandino Palermini: well deserving, for his vertues and commendable qualities, to enjoy of her whatsoever he could desire. Secretly they were espoused together, but Fortune, the enemy to Lovers felicities, opposed her malice against them, in depriving Theobaldo of those deere delights, which sometime he held in free possession, and making him as a stranger to her gracious favours. Now grew shee contemptibly to despise him, not onely denying to heare any message sent from him, but scorning also to vouchsafe so much as a sight of him, causing in him extreme griefe and melancholy, yet concealling all her unkindnesse so wisely to himselfe, as no one could understand the reason of his sadnesse.

After he had laboured by all hopefull courses, to obtaine that favour of her, which he had formerly lost, without any offence in him, as his innocent soule truly witnessed with him, and saw that all his further endeavours were fruitlesse and in vaine; he concluded to retreate himselfe from the World, and not to be any longer irkesome in her eye, that was the onely occasion of his unhappinesse. Hereupon, storing himselfe with such summes of money, as suddenly he could collect together, secretly he departed from Florence, without speaking any word to his friends or kindred; except one kinde companion of his, whom he acquainted with most of his secrets, and so travelled to Ancona, where he termed himselfe by the name of Sandoloscio. Repairing to a wealthy Merchant there, he placed himselfe as his servant, and went in a Ship of his with him to Cyprus; his actions and behaviour proved so pleasing to the Merchant, as not onely he allowed him very sufficient wages, but also grew into such association with him; as he gave the most of his affaires into his hands, which he guided with such honest and discreete care, that hee himselfe (in few yeeres compasse) proved to be a rich Merchant, and of famous report.

While matters went on in this successefull manner, although he could not chuse, but still he remembred his cruell Mistresse, and was very desperately transported for her love, as coveting (above all things else) to see her once more; yet was he of such powerfull constancy, as 7 whole yeeres together, he vanquished all those fierce conflicts. But on a day it chanced he heard a song sung in Cyprus, which he himselfe had formerly made, in honour of the love he bare to his Mistresse, and what delight he conceived, by being dayly in her presence; whereby he gathered, that it was impossible for him to forget her, and proceeded on so desirously, as he could not live, except he had a sight of her once more, and therefore determined on his returne to Florence. Having set all his affaires in due order, accompanied with a servant of his onely, he passed to Ancona, where when he was arrived, he sent his Merchandises to Florence, in name of the Merchant of Ancona, who was his especiall friend and partner; travayling



himselfe alone with his servant, in the habite of a Pilgrime, as if he had beene newly returned from Jerusalem.

Being come to Florence, he went to an Inne kept by two brethren, neere neighbours to the dwelling of his Mistresse, and the first thing he did, was passing by her doore, to get a sight of her if he were so happie. But he found the windowes, doores, and all parts of the house fast shut up, whereby he suspected her to be dead, or else to be changed from her dwelling: wherefore (much perplexed in minde) he went on to the two brothers Inne, finding foure persons standing at the gate, attired in mourning, whereat he marvelled not a little; knowing himselfe to be so transfigured, both in body and habite, farre from the manner of common use at his parting thence, as it was a difficult matter to know him: he stept boldly to a Shooe-makers shop neere adjoyning, and demanded the reason of their wearing mourning. The Shooe-maker made answer thus; Sir, those men are clad in mourning, because a brother of theirs, being named Theobaldo (who hath beene absent hence a long while) about some fifteene dayes since was slaine. And they having heard, by proofe made in the Court of Justice, that one Aldobrandino Palermini (who is kept close prisoner) was the murtherer of him, as he came in a disguised habite to his daughter, of whom he was most affectionately enamoured; cannot chuse, but let the World know by their outward habits, the inward affliction of their hearts, for a deede so dishonourably committed.

Theobaldo wondered greatly hereat, imagining, that some man belike resembling him in shape, might be slaine in this manner, and by Aldobrandino, for whose misfortune he grieved marvellously. As concerning his Mistresse, he understood that shee was living, and in good health; and night drawing on apace, he went to his lodging, with infinite molestations in his minde, where after supper, he was lodged in a Corne-loft with his man. Now by reason of many disturbing imaginations, which incessantly wheeled about his braine, his bed also being none of the best, and his supper (perhaps) somewhat of the coursest; a great part of the night was spent, yet could he not close his eyes together. But lying still broade awake, about the dead time of night, he heard the treading of divers persons over his head, who discended downe a paire of stayres by his Chamber, into the lower parts of the house, carrying a light with them, which he discerned by the chinkes and crannies in the wall. Stepping softly out of his bed, to see what the meaning hereof might be, he espied a faire young woman, who carried a light in her hand, and three men in her company, descending downe the stayres together, one of them speaking thus to the young woman. Now we may boldly warrant our saftey, because we have heard it assuredly, that the death of Theobaldo Elisei, hath beene sufficiently approved by the Brethren, against Aldobrandino Palermini, and he hath confessed the fact; whereupon the sentence is already set downe in writing. But yet it behooveth us notwithstanding, to conceale it very secretly, because if ever hereafter it should be knowne, that we are they who murthered him, we shall be in the same danger, as now Aldobrandino is.

When Theobaldo had heard these words, hee began to consider with himselfe, how many and great the dangers are, wherewith mens minds may dayly be molested. First, he thought on his owne brethren in their sorrow, and buried a stranger insteed of him, accusing afterward (by false opinion, and upon the testimony of as false witnesses) a man most innocent, making him ready for the stroke of death. Next, he made a strict observation in his soule, concerning the blinded severity of Law, and the Ministers thereto belonging, who pretending a diligent and carefull inquisition for truth, doe oftentimes (by their tortures and torments) heare lies avouched (onely for ease of paine) in the place of a true confession, yet thinking themselves (by doing so) to be the Ministers of God and Justice, whereas indeede they are the Divels executioners of his wickednesse. Lastly, converting his thoughts to Aldobrandino, the imagined murtherer of a man yet living, infinite cares beleagured his soule, in devising what might best be done for his deliverance.

So soone as he was risen in the morning, leaving his servant behinde him in his lodging, he went (when he thought it fit time) all alone toward the house of his Mistresse, where finding by good fortune the gate open, he entred into a small Parlour beneath, and where he saw his Mistresse sitting on the ground, wringing her hands, and wofully weeping, which (in meere compassion) moved him to weepe likewise; and going somewhat neere her, he saide. Madame, torment your selfe no more, for your peace is not farre off from you. The Gentlewoman hearing him say so, lifted up her head, and in teares spake thus. Good man, thou seemest to me to be a Pilgrime stranger; what doest thou know, either concerning my peace, or mine affliction? Madame (replied the Pilgrime) I am of Constantinople, and (doubtlesse) am conducted hither by the hand of Heaven, to convert your teares into rejoycing, and to deliver your Father from death. How is this? answered shee: If thou be of Constantinople, and art but now arrived here; doest thou know who we are, either I, or my Father?

The Pilgrime discoursed to her, even from the one end to the other, the history of her husbands sad disasters, telling her, how many yeeres since she was espoused to him, and many other important matters, which well shee knew, and was greatly amazed thereat, thinking him verily to be a Prophet, and kneeling at his feete, entreated him very earnestly, that if he were come to deliver her Father Aldobrandino from death, to doe it speedily, because the time was very short. The Pilgrime appearing to be a man of great holinesse, saide. Rise up Madame, refraine from weeping, and observe attentively what I shall say; yet with this caution, that you never reveale it to any person whatsoever. This tribulation whereinto you are falne, (as by revelation I am faithfully informed) is for a grievous sinne by you heretofore committed, whereof divine mercy is willing to purge you, and to make a perfect amends by a sensible feeling of this affliction; as seeking your sound and absolute recovery, least you fall into farre greater danger then before. Good man (quoth shee) I am burthened with many sinnes, and doe not know for which any amends should be made by me; any one sooner then other: wherefore if you have intelligence thereof, for charities sake tell it me, and I will doe so much as lieth in me, to make a full satisfaction for it. Madame, answered the Pilgrime, I know well enough what it is, and will demand it no more of you, to winne any further knowledge thereof, then I have already: but because in revealing it your selfe, it may touch you with the more true compunction of soule; let us goe to the point indeede, and tell mee, doe you remember, that at any time you were married to an Husband, or no?

At the hearing of these words, shee breathed foorth a very vehement sigh, and was stricken with admiration at this question, beleeving that not any one had knowledge thereof. Howbeit, since the day of the supposed Theobaldaes buriall, such a rumour ran abroade, by meanes of some speeches, rashly dispersed by a friend of Theobaldoes, who (indeede) knew it; whereupon shee returned him this answer. It appeareth to me (good man) that divine ordinativation hath revealed unto you all the secrets of men; and therefore I am determined, not to conceale any of mine from you. True it is, that in my younger yeeres, being left a widdow, I entirely affected an unfortunate young Gentleman, who (in secret) was my Husband, and whose death is imposed on my Father. The death of him I have the more bemoaned, because (in reason) it did neerely concerne me, by shewing my selfe so savage and rigorous to him before his departure: neverthelesse, let me assure you Sir, that neither his parting, long absence from me, or his untimely death, never had the power to bereave my heart of his remembrance.

Madame, saide the Pilgrime, the unfortinate young Gentleman that is slaine, did never love you; but sure I am, that Theobaldo Elisei loved you deerely. But tell me, what was the occasion whereby you conceived such hatred against him? Did he at any time offend you? No truly Sir, quoth shee; but the reason of my anger towards him, was by the words and threatnings of a religious Father, to whom once I revealed (under confession) how faithfully I affected him, and what private familiarity had passed betweene us. When instantly he used such dreadfull threatnings to me, and which (even yet) doe afflict my soule, that I did not abstaine, and utterly refuse him, the Divell would fetch me quicke to Hell, and cast me into the bottome of his quenchlesse and everlasting fire.

These menaces were so prevailing with me, as I refused all further conversation with Theobaldo, in which regard, I would receive neither letters or messages from him. Howbeit, I am perswaded, that if he had continued here still, and not departed hence in such desperate manner as hee did, seeing him melt and consume dayly away, even as Snow by power of the Sunne-beames: my austere deliberation had beene long agoe quite altered, because not at any time (since then) life hath allowed me one merry day, neither did I, or ever can love any man like unto him.

At these wordes the Pilgrime sighed, and then proceeded on againe thus. Surely Madame, this one onely sin, may justly torment you, because I know for a certainty, that Theobaldo never offered you any injury, since the day hee first became enamoured of you; and what grace or favour you affoorded him, was your owne voluntary gift, and (as he tooke it) no more then in modesty might well become you; for hee loving you first, you had beene most cruell and unkinde, if you should not have requited him with the like affection. If then he continued so just and loyall to you, as (of mine owne knowledge) I am able to say he did; what should move you to repulse him so rudely? Such matters ought well to bee considered on before hand; for if you did imagine, that you should repent it as an action ill done, yet you could not doe it, because as hee became yours, so were you likewise onely his; and he being yours, you might dispose of him at your pleasure, as being truely obliged to none but you. How could you then with-draw your selfe from him, being onely his, and not commit most manifest theft, a farre unfitting thing for you to doe, except you had gone with his consent.

Now Madame, let me further give you to understand, that I am a religious person, and a pilgrime, and therefore am well acquainted with all the courses of their dealing; if therefore I speake somewhat more amply of them, and for your good, it can not be so unseeming for mee to doe it, as it would appeare ugly in another. In which respect, I will speake the more freely to you, to the ende, that you may take better knowledge of them, then (as it seemeth) hitherto you have done. In former passed times such as professed Religion, were learned and most holy persons; but our religious professours now adayes, and such as covet to bee so esteemed; have no matter at all of Religion in them, but onely the outward shew and habite. Which yet is no true badge of Religion neither, because it was ordained by religious institutions, that their garments should bee made of narrow, plaine, and coursest spun cloth, to make a publike manifestation to the world, that (in meere devotion, and religious disposition) by wrapping their bodies in such base clothing, they condemned and despised all temporall occasions. But now adaies they make them large, deepe, glistering, and of the finest cloth or stuffes to bee gotten, reducing those habites to so proude and pontificall a forme, that they walke Peacock-like, rustling, and strouting with them in the Churches; yea, and in open publike places, as if they were ordinary secular persons, to have their pride more notoriously observed. And as the Angler bestoweth his best cunning, with one line and baite to catch many fishes at one strike; even so do these counterfeited habit-mongers, by their dissembling and crafty dealing, beguile many credulous widdowes: simple women, yea, and men of weake capacity, to credit whatsoever they doe or say, and herein they doe most of all exercise themselves.

And to the end, that my speeches may not savor of any untruth against them; these men which I speake of, have not any habite at all of religious men, but onely the colour of their garments, and whereas they in times past, desired nothing more then the salvation of mens soules; these fresher witted fellowes, covet after women and wealth, and employ all their paines by their whispering confessions, and figures of painted fearefull examples, to affright and terrifie unsetled and weake consciences, by horrible and blasphemous speeches; yet adding perswasion withall, that their sinnes may be purged by Almes-deedes and Masses. To the end, that such as credit them in these their dayly courses, being guided more by apparance of devotion, then any true compunction of heart, to escape severe penances by them enjoyned: may some of them bring bread, others wine, others coyne, all of them matter of commoditie and benefit, and simply say, these gifts are for the soules of their good friends deceased.

I make not any doubt, but almes-deedes and prayers, are very mighty; and prevailing meanes, to appease heavens anger for some sinnes committed; but if such as bestow them, did either see or know, to whom they give them: they would more warily keepe them, or else cast them before Swine, in regard they are altogether so unworthy of them. But come we now to the case of your ghostly father, crying out in your eare, that secret mariage was a most greevous sinne: Is not the breach thereof farre greater? Familiar conversation betweene man and woman, is a concession meerely naturall: but to rob, kill, or banish any one, proceedeth from the mindes malignity. That thou did rob Theobaldo, your selfe hath already sufficiently witnessed, by taking that from him, which with free consent in mariage you gave him. Next I must say, that by all the power remaining in you, you kild him, because you would not permit him to remaine with you, declaring your selfe in the very height of cruelty, that hee might destroy his life by his owne hands. In which case the Law requireth, that whosoever is the occasion of an ill act committed, hee or she is as deepe in the fault, as the party that did it. Now concerning his banishment, and wandring seaven yeeres in exile thorow the world; you cannot denie, but that you were the onely occasion thereof. In all which three severall actions, farre more capitally have you offended; then by contracting of mariage in such clandestine manner.

But let us see, whether Theobaldo deserved all these severall castigations, or not. In trueth he did not, your selfe have confessed (beside that which I know) that hee loved you more deerely then himselfe, and nothing could be more honoured, magnified and exalted, then dayly you were by him, above all other women whatsoever. When hee came in any place, where honestly, and without suspition hee might speake to you: all his honour, and all his liberty, lay wholly committed into your power. Was hee not a noble young Gentleman? Was he (among all those parts that most adorne a man, and appertaine to the very choycest respect) inferiour to any one of best merit in your Citie? I know that you cannot make deniall to any of these demands. How could you then by the perswasion of a beast, a foole, a villaine, yea, a vagabond, envying both his happinesse and yours, enter into so cruell a minde against him? I know not what error misguideth women, in scorning and despising their husbands: but if they entred into a better consideration, understanding truely what they are, and what nobility of nature God hath endued man withall, farre above all other creatures; it would bee their highest title of glory, when they are so preciously esteemed of them, so dearely affected by them, and so gladly embraced in all their best abilities.

This is so great a sinne, as the divine Justice (which in an equall Ballance bringeth all operations to their full effect) did not purpose to leave unpunished; but as you enforced against all reason, to take away Theobaldo from your selfe: even so your father Aldobrandino, without any occasion given by Theobaldo, is in perill of his life, and you a partaker of his tribulation. Out of which if you desire to be delivered, it is very convenient that you promise one thing which I shall tell you, and may much better be by you performed. Namely, that if Theobaldo do returne from his long banishment, you shall restore him to your love, grace, and good acceptation; accounting him in the selfe-same degree of favour and private entertainment, as he was at the first, before your wicked ghostly father so hellishly incensed you against him.

When the Pilgrim had finished his speeches, the Gentlewoman who had listned to them very attentively (because all the alledged reasons appeared to be plainly true) became verily perswaded, that all these afflictions had falne on her and her father, for the ingratefull offence by her committed, and therefore thus replied. Worthy man, and the friend to goodnesse, I know undoubtedly, that the words which you have spoken are true, and also I understand by your demonstration, what manner of people some of those religious persons are, whom heretofore I have reputed to be Saints, but find them now to be far otherwise. And to speake truly, I perceive the fault to be great and greevous, wherein I have offended against Theobaldo, and would (if I could) willingly make amends, even in such manner as you have advised. But how is it possible to be done? Theobaldo being dead, can be [no] more recalled to this life; and therefore, I know not what promise I should make, in a matter which is not to bee performed. Whereto the Pilgrime without any longer pausing, thus answered.

Madam, by such revelations as have beene shewne to me, I know for a certainety, that Theobaldo is not dead, but living, in health, and in good estate; if he had the fruition of your grace and favour. Take heede what you say Sir (quoth the Gentlewoman) for I saw him lye slain before my doore, his bodie having received many wounds, which I folded in mine armes, and washed his face with my brinish teares; whereby (perhaps) the scandall arose, that flew abroad to my disgrace. Beleeve me Madam, replyed the Pilgrim, say what you will, I dare assure you that Theobaldo is living, and if you dare make promise, concerning what hath bin formerly requested, and keepe it inviolably, I make no doubt, but you your selfe shall shortly see him. I promise it (quoth she) and binde my selfe thereto by a sacred oath, to keepe it faithfully: for never could any thing happen to yeeld me the like contentment, as to see my Father free from danger, and Theobaldo living.

At this instant Theobaldo thought it to be a very apt and convenient time to disclose himselfe, and to comfort the Lady, with an assured signall of hope, for the deliverance of her Father, wherefore he said: Ladie, to the end that I may comfort you infallibly in this dangerous perill of your fathers life, I am to make knowne an especiall secret to you, which you are to keepe carefully (as you tender your owne life) from ever being revealed to the world. They were then in a place of sufficient privacie, and by themselves, because she reposed great confidence in the Pilgrims sanctity of life, as thinking him none other then he seemed to be. Theobaldo tooke out of his Purse a Ring, which she gave him the last night of their conversing together, and he had kept with no meane care: and shewing it to her, said; Do you know this Ring Madam? So soone as she saw it, immediatly she knew it, and answered, Yes Sir, I know the Ring, and confesse that heretofore I gave it to Theobaldo.

Heereupon the Pilgrime stood up, and sodainly putting off his poore linnen Frock, and the Hood from his head, using his Florentine tongue, he said; Tell me Madam, do you not know me? When she had advisedly beheld him, and knew him indeed to be Theobaldo, she was stricken into a wonderfull astonishment, being as fearfull of him, as she was of the dead body which she saw lying in the street. And I dare assure you, that she durst not go neere him, to respect him as Theobaldo lately come from Cyprus, but (in terror) fled away from him; as if Theobaldo had bin newly risen out of his grave, and came thither purposely to affright her; wherefore he said. Be not affraid Madam, I am your Theobaldo, in health, alive, and never as yet died, neither have I received any wounds to kill mee, as you and my brethren had formerly imagined.

Some better assurance getting possession of her, as knowing him perfectly by his voice, and looking more stedfastly on his face, which constantly avouched him to be Theobaldo; the teares trickling amaine downe her faire cheekes, shee ran to embrace him, casting her armes about his necke, and kissing him a thousand times, saying; Theobaldo, my faithfull husband, nothing in the world can be so welcom to me. Theobaldo having most kindly kissed and embraced her, said; Sweet wife, time wil not now allow us those ceremonious courtesies, which (indeed) so long a separation do justly challenge; for I must about a more weighty busines, to have your Father safely delivered, which I hope to do before to morow night when you shall heare tydings to your better contentment. And questionlesse, if I speed no worse then my good hope perswadeth me, I will see you againe to night, and acquaint you at better leysure, in such things as I cannot do now at this present.

So putting on his Pilgrimes habit againe, kissing her once more, and comforting her with future good successe, he departed from her, going to the prison where Aldobrandino lay, whom hee found more pensive, as being in hourely expectation of death, then any hope he had to be freed from it. Being brought neerer to him by the prisoners favour, as seeming to be a man come onely to comfort him: sitting downe by him, thus he began. Aldobrandino, I am a friend of thine, whom Heaven hath sent to doe thee good, in meere pittie and compassion of thine innocency. And therefore, if thou wilt grant me one small request, which I am earnestly to crave at thy hands, thou shalt heare (without any failing) before to morrow at night, the sentence of thy free absolution, whereas now thou expectest nothing but death; whereunto Aldobrandino thus answered. Friendly man, seeing thou art so carefull of my safety (although I know thee not, neither doe remember that ere I saw thee till now) thou must needs be some especiall kinde friend of mine. And to tell thee the truth, I never committed the sinful deed for which I am condemned to death. True it is, I have other heinous and greevous sins, which (undoubtedly) have throwne this heavy judgement on me, and therefore I am the more willing to undergo it. Neverthelesse, let me thus farre assure thee, that

I would gladly not onely promise something which might be to the glory of God, if he were pleased in this case to have mercy on me; but also would as willingly performe and accomplish it. Wherefore, demaund whatsoever thou pleasest, for unfainedly (if I escape with life) I will truly keepe promise with thee.

Sir, replyed the Pilgrime, I desire nor demand any thing of you, but that you would pardon the foure Brethren of Theobaldo, that brought you to this hard extremity, as thinking you to be guilty of their brothers death, and that you would also accept them as your brethren and friends upon their craving pardon for what they have done. Sir, answered Aldobrandino, no man knoweth how sweet revenge is, nor with what heate it is to be desired, but onely the man who hath bene wronged. Notwithstanding, not to hinder any hope, which onely aymeth at Heaven, I freely forgive them, and henceforth pardon them for ever, intending moreover, that if mercy give me life, and cleere me from this bloody imputation, to love and respect them so long as I shall live. This answere was most pleasing to the Pilgrime, and without any further multiplication of speeches, he entreated him to be of good comfort, for he feared not but before the time prefixed, he should heare certaine tydings of his deliverance.

At his departing from him, hee went directly to the Signoria, and prevailed so farre, that he spake privately with a Knight, who was then one of the States chiefest Lords, to whom he saide. Sir, a man ought to bestow his best paines and diligence, that the truth of things should be apparantly knowne, especially, such men as hold the place and office as you doe: to the end, that those persons which have committed no foule offence, should not bee punished, but onely the guilty and haynous transgressors. And because it will be no meane honor to you, to lay the blame where it worthily deserveth, I am come hither purposely, to informe you in a case of most weighty importance. It is not unknowne to you, with what rigour the State hath proceeded against Aldobrandino Palermini, and you think verily he is the man that hath slaine Theobaldo Elisei, whereupon your Law hath condemned him to die. I dare assure you Sir, that a very unjust course hath beene taken in this case, because Aldobrandino is falsly accused, as you your selfe will confesse before midnight, when they are delivered into your power, that were the murderers of the man.

The honest Knight, who was very sorrowfull for Aldobrandino, gladly gave attention to the Pilgrime, and having conferred on many matters, appertaining to the fact committed: the two Brethren who were Theobaldoes Hostes, and their Chambermaid, upon good advice given, were apprehended in their first sleep, without any resistance made in their defence. But when the tortures were sent for, to understand truly how the case went, they would not endure any paine at all, but each aside by himselfe, and then altogether confessed openly, that they did the deede, yet not knowing him to be Theobaldo Elisei. And when it was demanded of them, upon what occasion they did so foule an act, they answered, that they were so hatefull against the mans life, because he would luxuriouslie have abused one of their wives, when they both were absent from their owne home.

When the Pilgrim had heard their voluntary confession, he tooke his leave of his Knight, returning secretly to the house of Madam Hermelina, and there (because all her people were in their beds) she carefully awaited his returne, to heare some glad tydings of her father, and to make a further reconciliation betweene her and Theobaldo, when sitting downe by her, he said: Deare Love, be of good cheere, for (upon my word) to morrow you shall have your father home safe, well, and delivered from all further danger: and to confirme her the more confidently in his words, he declared at large the whole carriage of the businesse. Hermelina being wondrously joyfull, for two such sodaine and successefull accidents to injoy her husband alive and in health, and also to have her father freed from so great a danger; kissed and embraced him most affectionately, welcomming him lovingly into her bed, whereto so long time hee had beene a stranger.

No sooner did bright day appeare, but Theobaldo arose, having acquainted her with such matters as were to be done, and once more earnestly desiring her, to conceale (as yet) these occurrences to her selfe. So in his Pilgrims habit, he departed from her house, to awaite convenient opportunity, for attending on the businesse belonging to Aldobrandino. At the usuall houre appointed, the Lords were all set in the Signioria, and had received full information, concerning the offence imputed to Aldobrandino, setting him at liberty by publique consent, and sentencing the other malefactors with death, who (within a few dayes after) were beheaded in the place where the murther was committed. Thus Aldobrandino being released, to his exceeding comfort, and no small joy of his daughter, kindred, and friends, all knowing perfectly, that this had happened by the Pilgrims meanes, they conducted him home to Aldobrandinoes house, where they desired him to continue so long as himselfe pleased, using him with most honourable and gracious respect, but especially Hermelina, who knew (better then the rest) on whom she bestowed her liberall favours, yet concealing all closely to her selfe.

After two or three dayes were over-past, in these complementall entercoursings of kindnesse, Theobaldo began to consider, that it was high time for reconciliation, to be solemnely past betweene his brethren and Aldobrandino. For, they were not a little amazed at his strange deliverance, and went likewise continually armed, as standing in feare of Aldobrandino and his friends; which made him the more earnest, for accomplishment of the promise formerly made unto him. Aldobrandino lovingly replied, that he was ready to make good his word. Whereupon, the Pilgrime provided a goodly Banquet, whereat he pursued to have present Aldobrandino, his Daughter, Kindred, and their wives. But first, himselfe went in person, to invite them in peace to his banquet, using many pregnant and forcible reasons to them, such as are requisite in the like discordant cases. In the end, they were so wise and prevailing with them that they willingly condiscended, and thought it no disparagement unto them, for the recovery of Aldobrandinoes kindnesse againe, to crave pardon for their great error committed.

On the morrow following, about dinner time, the foure brethren of Theobaldo, attired in their mourning garments, with their wives and frends came first to the house of Aldobrandino, who purposely stayed for them; and having laid downe their weapons on the ground, in the presence of all such as Aldobrandino had invited as his witnesses, they offered themselves to his mercy, and humbly required pardon of him, for the matter wherein they had offended him. Aldobrandino shedding teares, most lovingly embraced them, and (to be briefe) pardoned whatsoever injuries he had received. After this, the sisters and wives, all clad in mourning, courteously submitted themselves, and were graciously welcommed by Madame Hermelina, as also divers other Gentlewomen there present with her. Being all seated at the Tables, which were furnished with such rarities as could be wished for; al things else deserved their due commendation, but onely sad silence, occasioned by the fresh remembrance of sorow, appearing in the habites of Theobaldoes friends and kindred, which the Pilgrim himselfe plainly perceived, to be the onely disgrace to him and his feast. Wherefore, as before he had resolved, when time served to purge away this melancholly, he arose from the Table, when some (as yet) had scarse begun to eate, and thus spake.

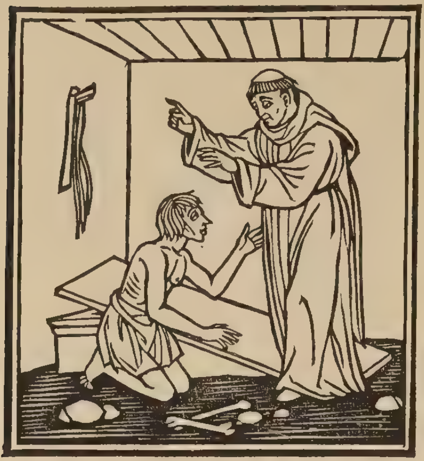
Gracious company, there is no defect in this Banquet, or more debars it of the honour it might else have, but onely the presence of Theobaldo, who having bin continually in your company, it seemes you are not willing to take knowledge of him, and therefore I meane my selfe to shew him. So, uncasing himselfe out of his Pilgrimes clothes, and standing in his Hose and Doublet, to their no little admiration, they all knew him, yet doubted whether it were he, or no. Which he perceiving, he repeated his brethrens and absent kindreds names, and what occurrences hapned betweene them from time to time, beside the relation of his owne passed fortunes, inciting teares in the eyes of his brethren, and all else there present, every one hugging and embracing him, yea, many beside, who were no kin at all to him. Hermelina onely excepted: which when Aldobrandino saw, he said unto her; How now Hermelina? Why doest thou not welcome home Theobaldo, so kindly as the rest have done?

She making a modest courtesie to her Father, and answering so loude as every one might heare her, said. There is not any in this assembly that more willingly would give him all expression of a joyfull welcom home and thankefull gratitude for such especiall favours received, then in my heart I could affoord to do, but onely in regard of those infamous speeches noysed out against me, on the day when we wept for him, who was supposed to be Theobaldo, which slander was to my great discredit. Go on boldly, replied Aldobrandino, doest thou think that I regard any such praters? In the procuring of my deliverance, he hath approved them to be manifest lyars, albeit I my selfe did never credit them. Go then I command thee, and let me see thee both kisse and embrace him. She who desired nothing more, shewed her selfe not slothfull in obeying her father to do but her duty to her husband. Wherefore being risen, as all the rest had done, but yet in farre more effectuall manner, she declared her unfained love to Theobaldo. These bountifull favours of Aldobrandino, were joyfully accepted by Theobaldoes brethren, as also to every one there present; so that all former rancour and hatred which had caused heavie variances betweene them, was now converted to mutuall kindnesse and solemne friendship on every side.

When the feasting dayes were finished, the garments of sad mourning were quite laid aside, and those (becomming so generall a joy) put on, to make their hearts and habites suteable. Now, concerning the man slaine, and supposed to be Theobaldo, hee was one, that in all parts of body, and truenesse of complexion so neerely resembled him, as Theobaldoes owne brethren could not distinguish the one from the other: but hee was of Lunigiana, named Fatinolo, and not Theobaldo, whom the two Brethren Inne-keepers maliced, about some idle suspition conceived, and having slaine him, layde his body at the doore of Aldobrandino, where by reason of Theobaldoes absence, it was generally reputed to be hee, and Aldobrandino charged to doe the deede, by vehement perswasion of the brethren, knowing what love had passed betweene him and his daughter Hermelina. But happy was the Pilgrims returne, first to heare those words in the Inne, the meanes to bring the murther to light, and then the discreet carriage of the Pilgrime, untill he plainly approved himselfe, to bee truely Theobaldo.

⁂

THE EIGHT NOVELL



WHEREIN IS DISPLAYED, THE APPARANT FOLLY OF JEALOUSIE: AND THE SUBTILITY OF SOME RELIGIOUS CARNALL MINDED MEN, TO BEGUILE SILLY AND SIMPLE MARIED MEN.

Ferando, *by drinking a certaine kinde of powder, was buried for dead. And by the Abbot, who was enamored of his Wife, was taken out of his Grave, and put into a darke prison, where they made him beleeve, that hee was in Purgatorie. Afterward, when time came that hee should bee raised to life againe; he was made to keepe a childe which the Abbot had got by his Wife.*

When the long discourse of Madame Æmilia was ended, not displeasing to any, in regard of the length, but rather held too short, because no exceptions could bee taken against it, comparing the raritie of the accidents, and changes together: the Queene turned to Madame Lauretto, giving her such a manifest signe, as she knew, that it was her turne to follow next, and therefore shee tooke occasion to begin thus. Faire Ladies, I intend to tell you a Tale of trueth, which (perhaps) in your opinions, will seeme to sound like a lye: and yet I heard by the very last relation, that a dead man was wept and mournd for, in sted of another being then alive. In which respect, I am now to let you know, how a living man was buried for dead, and being raised againe, yet not as living, himselfe, and divers more beside, did beleeve that he came forth of his grave, and adored him as a Saint, who was the occasion thereof, and who (as a bad man) deserved justly to be condemned.

In Tuscanie there was sometime an Abbey, seated, as now we see commonly they are, in a place not much frequented with people, and thereof a Monke was Abbot, very holy and curious in all things else, save onely a wanton appetite to women: which yet he kept so cleanly to himselfe, that though some did suspect it, yet it was knowne to very few. It came to passe, that a rich Country Franklin, named Ferando, dwelt as neere neighbour to the said Abby, he being a man materiall, of simple and grosse understanding, yet he fell into great familiarity with the Abbot; who made use of this friendly conversation to no other end, but for divers times of recreation; when he delighted to smile at his silly and sottish behaviour.

Upon this his private frequentation with the Abbot, at last he observed, that Ferando had a very beautifull woman to his Wife, with whom he grew so deeply in love, as he had no other meditations either by day or night, but how to become acceptable in her favour. Neverthelesse, he concealed his amorous passions privately to himselfe, and could plainely perceive, that although Ferando (in all things else) was meerely a simple fellow, and more like an Idiot, then of any sensible apprehension: yet was he wise enough in loving his Wife, keeping her carfully out of all company, as one (indeede) very jealous, least any should kisse her, but onely himselfe, which drove the Abbot into despaire, for ever attaining the issue of his desire. Yet being subtill, crafty, and cautelous, he wrought so on the flexible nature of Ferando, that hee brought his wife with him divers dayes to the Monasterie; where they walked in the goodly Garden, discoursing on the beatitudes of eternall life, as also the most holy deedes of men and women, long since departed out of this life, in mervailous civill and modest manner. Yet all these were but traines to a further intention, for the Abbot must needes be her ghostly Father, and she come to be confessed by him; which the foole Ferando tooke as an especiall favour, and therefore he gave his consent the sooner.

At the appointed time, when the woman came to confession to the Abbot, and was on her knees before him, to his no small contentment, before she would say any thing else, thus she began: Sacred Father, if God had not given me such an husband as I have, or else had bestowed on me none at all; I might have beene so happy, by the meanes of your holy doctrine, very easily to have entred into the way, whereof you spake the other day, which leadeth to eternall life. But when I consider with my selfe, what manner of man Ferando is, and thinke upon his folly withall; I may well terme my selfe to be a widow, although I am a maried wife, because while he liveth, I cannot have any other husband. And yet (as sottish as you see him) he is (without any occasion given him) so extreamely jealous of me; as I am not able to live with him, but only in continuall tribulation and hearts griefe. In which respect, before I enter into confession, I most humbly beseech you, that you would vouchsafe (in this distresse) to assist me with your fatherly advice and counsell, because, if thereby I cannot attaine to a more pleasing kinde of happinesse; neither confession, or any thing else, is able to doe me any good at all.

These words were not a little welcome to my Lord Abbot, because (thereby) he halfe assured himselfe, that Fortune had laid open the path to his hoped pleasures. Whereupon he said. Deare daughter, I make no question to the contrary, but it must needes be an exceeding infelicity, to so faire and goodly a young woman as you are, to be plagued with so sottish an husband, brainsick, and without the use of common understanding; but yet subject to a more hellish affliction then all these, namely jealousie, and therefore you being in this wofull manner tormented, your tribulations are not only so much the more credited, but also as amply grieved for, and pittied. In which heavy and irksome perturbations, I see not any meanes of remedy, but onely one, being a kinde of physicke (beyond all other) to cure him of his foolish jealousie; which medicine is very familiar to me, because I know best how to compound it, alwayes provided, that you can be of so strong a capacity, as to be secret in what I shall say unto you.

Good Father (answered the Woman) never make you any doubt thereof, for I would rather endure death it selfe, then disclose any thing which you enjoyne me to keepe secret: wherefore, I beseech you Sir to tell me, how, and by what meanes it may be done. If (quoth the Abbot) you desire to have him perfectly cured, of a disease so dangerous and offensive, of necessity he must be sent into Purgatory. How may that be done, saide the woman, he being alive? He must needs die, answered the Abbot, for his more speedy passage thither; and when he hath endured so much punishment, as may expiate the quality of his jealousie, we have certaine devoute and zealous prayers, whereby to bring him backe againe to life, in as able manner as ever he was. Why then, replyed the woman, I must remaine in the state of a Widdow? Very true, saide the Abbot, for a certaine time, in all which space, you may not (by no meanes) marrie againe, because the heavens will therewith be highly offended: but Ferando being returned to life againe, you must repossesse him as your Husband, but never to be jealous any more. Alas Sir (quoth the woman) so that he may be cured of his wicked jealousie, and I no longer live in such an hellish imprisonment, do as you please.

Now was the Abbot (well neere) on the highest step of his hope, making her constant promise, to accomplish it: But (quoth he) what shall be my recompence when I have done it? Father, saide she, whatsoever you please to aske, if it remaine within the compasse of my power: but you being such a vertuous and sanctified man, and I a woman of so meane worth or merit; what sufficient recompence can I be able to make you? Whereunto the Abbot thus replyed. Faire woman, you are able to do as much for me, as I am for you, because I doe dispose my selfe, to performe a matter for your comfort and consolation, even so ought you to be as mindfull of me, in any action concerning my life and welfare. In any such matter Sir (quoth she) depending on your benefit so strictly, you may safely presume to command me. You must then (saide the Abbot) grant me your love, and the kinde embracing of your person; because so violent are mine affections, as I pine and consume away daily, till I enjoy the fruition of my desires, and none can helpe me therein but you.

When the woman heard these words, as one confounded with much amazement, thus shee replied. Alas, holy Father! What a strange motion have you made to me? I beleeved very faithfully, that you were no lesse then a Saint, and is it convenient, that when silly women come to aske counsell of such sanctified men, they should returne them such unfitting answeres? Be not amazed good woman, saide the Abbot, at the motion which I have made unto you, because holinesse is not thereby impaired a jot in me; for it is the inhabitant of the soule, the other is an imperfection attending on the body: but be it whatsoever, your beauty hath so powerfully prevailed on me, that entire love hath compelld me to let you know it. And more may you boast of your beauty, then any that ever I beheld before, considering, it is so pleasing to a sanctified man, that it can draw him from divine contemplations, to regard a matter of so humble an equalitie.

Let me tell you moreover, woorthy Woman, that see me reverenced here as Lord Abbot, yet am I but as other men are, and in regard I am neither aged, nor mishapen, me thinkes the motion I have made, should be the lesse offensive to you, and therefore the sooner granted. For, all the while as Ferando remaineth in Purgatory, doe you but imagine him to be present with you, and your perswasion will the more absolutely be confirmed. No man can, or shall be privy to our close meetings, for I carry the same holy opinion among all men, as you your selfe conceived of me, and none dare be so saucie, as to call in question whatsoever I doe or say, because my words are Oracles, and mine actions more than halfe miracles; doe you not then refuse so gracious an offer. Enow there are, who would gladly enjoy that, which is francke and freely presented to you, and which (if you be a wise Woman) is meerely impossible for you to refuse. Richly am I possessed of Gold and Jewels, which shall be all yours, if you please in favour to be mine, wherein I will not be gaine-saide, except your selfe do deny me.

The Woman having her eyes fixed on the ground, knew not well how shee should denie him; and yet in plaine words, to say shee consented, shee held it to be overbase and immodest, and ill agreeing with her former reputation: when the Abbot had well noted this attention in her, and how silent shee stood without returning any answere; he accounted the conquest to be more then halfe his owne: so that continuing on his former perswasions, hee never ceased, but allured her still to beleeve whatsoever he saide. And shee much ashamed of his importunity, but more of her owne flexible yeelding weaknesse, made answere, that shee would willingly accomplish his request; which yet shee did not absolutely grant, untill Ferando were first sent into Purgatory. And till then (quoth the Abbot) I will not urge any more, because I purpose his speedy sending thither: but yet, so farre lend me your assistance, that either to morrow, or else the next day, he may come hither once more to converse with me. So putting a faire gold Ring on her finger, they parted till the next meeting.

Not a little joyfull was the Woman of so rich a gift, hoping to enjoy a great many more of them, and returning home to her neighbours, acquainted them with wonderfull matters, all concerning the sanctimonious life of the Abbot, a meere miracle of men, and worthy to be truely termed a Saint. Within two dayes after, Ferando went to the Abbey againe, and so soone as the Abbot espyed him, he presently prepared for his sending of him into Purgatorie. He never was without a certaine kinde of drugge, which being beaten into powder, would worke so powerfully upon the braine, and all the other vitall senses, as to entrance them with a deadly sleepe, and deprive them of all motion, either in the pulses, or in any other part else, even as if the body were dead indeede; in which operation, it would so hold and continue, according to the quantity given and drunke, as it pleased the Abbot to order the matter. This powder or drugge, was sent him by a great Prince of the East, and therewith he wrought wonders upon his Novices, sending them into Purgatory when he pleased, and by such punishments as he inflicted on them there, made them (like credulous asses) beleeve whatsoever himselfe listed.

So much of this powder had the Abbot provided, as should suffice for three dayes entrancing, and having compounded it with a very pleasant Wine, calling Ferando into his Chamber, there gave it him to drinke, and afterward walked with him about the Cloyster, in very friendly conference together, the silly sot never dreaming on the treachery intended against him. Many Monkes beside were recreating themselves in the Cloyster, most of them delighting to behold the follies of Ferando, on whom the potion beganne so to worke, that he slept in walking, nodding and reeling as hee went, till at the last he fell downe, as if he had bene dead.

The Abbot pretending great admiration at this accident, called his Monkes about him, all labouring by rubbing his temples, throwing cold water and vinegar in his face, to revive him againe; alleaging that some fume or vapour in the stomacke, had thus over-awed his understanding faculties, and quite deprived him of life indeede. At length, when by tasting the pulse, and all their best employed paines, they saw that their labour was spent in vaine; the Abbot used such perswasions to the Monkes, that they all beleeved him to be dead: whereupon they sent for his wife and friends, who crediting as much as the rest did, were very sad and sorrowfull for him.

The Abbot (cloathed as he was) laide him in a hollow vault under a Tombe, such as there are used instead of Graves; his Wife returning home againe to her House, with a young Sonne which shee had by her Husband, protesting to keepe still within her House, and never more to be seene in any company, but onely to attend her young Sonne, and be very carefull of such wealth as her Husband had left unto her.

From the City of Bologna, that very instant day, a well staide and governed Monke there arrived, who was a neere kinsman to the Abbot, and one whom he might securely trust. In the dead time of the night, the Abbot and this Monke arose, and taking Ferando out of the vault, carried him into a darke dungeon or prison, which he termed by the name of Purgatory, and where hee used to discipline his Monkes, when they had committed any notorious offence, deserving to be punished in Purgatory. There they tooke off all his usuall wearing garments, and cloathed him in the habite of a Monke, even as if he had beene one of the house; and laying him on a bundle of straw, so left him untill his senses should be restored againe. On the day following, late in the evening, the Abbot, accompanied with his trusty Monke, (by way of visitation) went to see and comfort the supposed widow, finding her attired in blacke, very sad and pensive, which by his wonted perswasions, indifferently he appeased; challenging the benefit of her promise. Shee being thus alone, not hindered by her Husbands jealousie, and espying another goodly gold Ring on his finger, how frailety and folly over-ruled her, I know not, shee was a weake woman, he a divelish deluding man; and the strongest holdes by over long battery and besieging, must needs yeeld at the last, as I feare shee did: for very often afterward, the Abbot used in this manner to visit her, and the simple ignorant Country people, carrying no such ill opinion of the holy Abbot, and having seene Ferando lying for dead in the vault, and also in the habite of a Monke; were verily perswaded, that when they saw the Abbot passe by to and fro, but most commonly in the night season, it was the ghost of Ferando, who walked in this manner after his death, as a just pennance for his jealousie.

When Ferandoes senses were recovered againe, and he found himselfe to be in such a darkesome place; not knowing where he was, he beganne to crie and make a noyse. When presently the Monke of Bologna (according as the Abbot had tutored him) stept into the dungeon, carrying a little waxe candle in the one hand, and a smarting whip in the other, going to Ferando, he stript off his cloathes, and began to lash him very soundly. Ferando roaring and crying, could say nothing else, but where am I? The Monke (with a dreadfull voyce) replyed: Thou art in Purgatory. How? saide Ferando; what? Am I dead? Thou art dead (quoth the Monke) and began to lash him lustily againe. Poore Ferando, crying out for his Wife and little Sonne, demanded a number of idle questions, whereto the Monke still fitted him with as fantasticke answers. Within a while after, he set both foode and wine before him, which when Ferando saw, he saide; How is this? Doe dead men eate and drinke? Yes, replyed the Monke, and this foode which here thou seest, thy Wife brought hither to the Church this morning, to have Masses devoutly sung for thy soule, and as to other, so must it be set before thee, for such is the command of the Patrone of this place.

Ferando having lyen entranced three dayes and three nights, felt his stomacke well prepared to eate, and feeding very heartily, still saide; O my good Wife, O my loving Wife, long mayest thou live for this extraordinary kindnesse. I promise thee (sweete heart) while I was alive, I cannot remember, that ever any foode and wine was halfe so pleasing to me. O my deare Wife; O my hony Wife. Canst thou (quoth the Monke) prayse and commend her now, using her so villainously in thy life time? Then did he whip him more fiercely then before, when Ferando holding up his hands, as craving for mercy, demanded wherefore he was so severely punished? I am so commanded (quoth the Monke) by supreme power, and twice every day must thou be thus disciplinde. Upon what occasion? replyed Ferando. Because (quoth the Monke) thou wast most notoriously jealous of thy Wife, shee being the very kindest woman to thee, as all the Countrey containeth not her equall. It is too true, answered Ferando, I was over-much jealous of her indeede: but had I knowne, that jealousie was such a hatefull sinne against Heaven, I never would have offended therein.

Now (quoth the Monke) thou canst confesse thine owne wilfull follie, but this should have beene thought on before, and whilest thou wast living in the World. But if the Fates vouchsafe to favour thee so much, as hereafter to send thee to the World once more; remember thy punishment here in Purgatory, and sinne no more in that foule sinne of jealousie. I pray you Sir tell me, replyed Ferando, after men are dead, and put into Purgatory, is there any hope of their ever visiting the World any more? Yes, saide the Monke, if the fury of the Fates be once appeased. O that I knew (quoth Ferando) by what meanes they would be appeased, and let me visite the World once againe: I would be the best Husband that ever lived, and never more be jealous, never wrong so good a Wife, nor ever use one unkind word against her. In the meane while, and till their anger may be qualified; when next my Wife doth send me food, I pray you worke so much, that some Candles may be sent me also, because I live here in uncomfortable darkenesse; and what should I doe with food, if I have no light. Shee sends Lights enow, answered the Monke, but they are burnt out on the Altar in Masse-time, and thou canst have none other here, but such as I must bring my selfe; neither are they allowed, but onely for the time of thy feeding and correcting.

Ferando breathing foorth a vehement sigh, desired to know what he was, being thus appointed to punish him in Purgatory? I am (quoth the Monke) a dead man, as thou art, borne in Sardignia, where I served a very jealous Master; and because I soothed him in his jealousie, I had this pennance imposed on me, to serve thee here in Purgatory with meate and drinke, and (twice every day) to discipline thy body, untill the Fates have otherwise determined both for thee and me. Why? saide Ferando, are any other persons here, beside you and I? Many thousands, replyed the Monke, whom thou canst neither heare nor see, no more then they are able to doe the like by us. But how farre, saide Ferando, is Purgatory distant from our native Countries? About some fifty thousand leagues, answered the Monke; but yet passable in a moment, whensoever the offended Fates are pleased: and many Masses are daily saide for thy soule, at the earnest entreaty of thy Wife, in hope of thy conversion; and becomming a new man, hating to be jealous any more hereafter.

In these and such like speeches, as thus they beguiled the time, so did they observe it for a dayly course, sometime discipling, other whiles eating and drinking, for the space of ten whole moneths together: in the which time, the Abbot sildome failed to visite Ferandoes wife, without the least suspition in any of the neighbours, by reason of their setled opinion, concerning the nightly walking of Ferandoes ghost. But, as all pleasures cannot bee exempted from some following paine or other, so it came to passe, that Ferandoes wife proved to be conceived with childe, and the time was drawing on for her deliverance. Now began the Abbot to consider, that Ferandoes folly was sufficiently chastised, and he had beene long enough in Purgatory: wherefore, the better to countenance all passed inconveniences, it was now thought high time, that Ferando should be sent to the world againe, and set free from the paines of Purgatory, as having payed for his jealousie dearely, to teach him better wisedome hereafter.

Late in the dead time of the night, the Abbot himselfe entred into the darke dungeon, and in an hollow counterfeited voyce, called to Ferando, saying. Comfort thy selfe Ferando, for the Fates are now pleased, that thou shalt bee released out of Purgatory, and sent to live in the world againe. Thou didst leave thy wife newly conceived with childe, and this very morning she is delivered of a goodly Sonne, whom thou shalt cause to be named Bennet: because, by the incessant prayers of the holy Abbot, thine owne loving Wife, and for sweet Saint Bennets sake, this grace and favour is afforded thee. Ferando hearing this, was exceeding joyfull, and returned this answere: For ever honored be the Fates, the holy Lord Abbot, blessed Saint Bennet, and my most dearely beloved Wife, whom I will faithfully love for ever, and never more offend her by any jealousie in me.

When the next foode was sent to Ferando, so much of the powder was mingled with the wine, as would serve onely for foure houres entrauncing, in which time, they clothed him in his owne wearing apparell againe, the Abbot himselfe in person, and his honest trusty Monke of Bologna, conveying and laying him in the same vault under the Tombe, where at the first they gave him buriall. The next morning following, about the breake of day, Ferando recovered his senses, and thorow divers chinkes and crannies of the Tombe, descried daylight, which hee had not seene in tenne moneths space before. Perceiving then plainely, that he was alive, he cryed out aloude, saying: Open, open, and let mee forth of Purgatory, for I have beene heere long enough in conscience. Thrusting up his head against the cover of the Tombe, which was not of any great strength, neither well closed together; hee put it quite off the Tombe, and so got forth upon his feete: at which instant time, the Monks having ended their morning Mattins, and hearing the noyse, ran in hast thither, and knowing the voyce of Ferando, saw that he was come forth of the Monument.

Some of them were ancient Signiors of the house, and yet but meere Novices (as all the rest were) in these cunning and politique stratagems of the Lord Abbot, when hee intended to punish any one in Purgatory: and therefore, being affrighted, and amazed at this rare accident; they fled away from him, running to the Abbot, who making a shew to them, as if he were but new come forth of his Oratory, in a kinde of pacifying speeches, saide; Peace my deare Sonnes, be not affraide, but fetch the Crosse and Holy-water hither; then follow me, and I will shew you, what miracles the Fates have pleased to shew in our Convent, therefore be silent, and make no more noise; all which was performed according to his command.

Ferando looking leane and pale, as one, that in so long time hadde not seene the light of heaven, and endured such strict discipline twice every day: stood in a gastly amazement by the Tombesside, as not daring to adventure any further, or knowing perfectly, whether he was (as yet) truly alive, or no. But when he saw the Monkes and Abbot comming, with their lighted Torches, and singing in a solemne manner of Procession, he humbled himselfe at the Abbots feete, saying. Holy Father, by your zealous prayers (as hath bin miraculously revealed to me) and the prayers of blessed S. Bennet; as also of my honest, deare, and loving Wife, I have bin delivered from the paines of Purgatory, and brought againe to live in this world; for which unspeakable grace and favour, most humbly I thanke the well-pleased Fates, S. Bennet, your Father-hood, and my kinde Wife, and will remember all your loves to me for ever. Blessed be the Fates, answered the Abbot, for working so great a wonder heere in our Monastery. Go then my good Son, seeing the Fates have bin so gracious to thee; Go (I say) home to thine owne house, and comfort thy kind wife, who ever since thy departure out of this life, hath lived in continuall mourning, love, cherish, and make much of her, never afflicting her henceforth with causlesse jealousie. No I warrant you good Father, replyed Ferando; I have bin well whipt in Purgatory for such folly, and therefore I might be called a starke foole, if I should that way offend any more, either my loving wife, or any other.

The Abbot causing Miserere to be devoutly sung, sprinkling Ferando well with Holy-water, and placing a lighted Taper in his hand, sent him home so to his owne dwelling Village: where when the Neighbours beheld him, as people halfe frighted out of their wits, they fled away from him, so scared and terrified, as if they had seene some dreadfull sight, or gastly apparition; his wife being as fearfull of him, as any of the rest. He called to them kindly by their severall names, telling them, that he was newly risen out of his grave, and was a man as he had bin before. Then they began to touch and feele him, growing into more certaine assurance of him, perceiving him to be a living man indeede: whereupon they demanded many questions of him; and he, as if he were become farre wiser then before, told them tydings, from their long deceased Kindred and Friends, as if he had met with them all in Purgatory, reporting a thousand lyes and fables to them, which (neverthelesse) they beleeved.

Then he told them what the miraculous voice had said unto him, concerning the birth of another young Sonne, whom (according as he was commanded) he caused to be named Bennet Ferando. Thus his returne to life againe, and the daily wonders reported by him, caused no meane admiration in the people, with much commendation of the Abbots holinesse, and Ferandoes happy curing his jealousie.

⁂

THE NINTH NOVELL

COMMENDING THE GOOD JUDGEMENT AND UNDERSTANDING IN LADIES OR GENTLEWOMEN, THAT ARE OF A QUICKE AND APPREHENSIVE SPIRIT.

JULIET of Narbona, cured the King of France of a daungerous Fistula, in recompence whereof, she requested to enjoy as her husband in marriage, Bertrand Count of Roussilion. Hee having married her against his will, as utterly despising her, went to Florence, where hee made love to a young Gentlewoman. Juliet, by a queint and cunning policy, compassed the meanes (insted of his chosen new friend) to lye with her owne husband, by whom shee conceived, and had two Sonnes; which being afterward made knowne unto Count Bertrand, he accepted her into his favour againe, and loved her as his loyall and honourable wife.

Now there remained no more (to preserve the priviledge granted to Dioneus uninfringed) but the Queene onely, to declare her Novell. Wherefore, when the discourse of Madam Lauretta was ended, without attending any motion to bee made for her next succeeding, with a gracious and pleasing disposition, thus she began to speake. Who shall tell any Tale heereafter, to carry any hope or expectation of a liking, having heard the rare and wittie discourse of Madame Lauretta? Beleeve me, it was very advantageable to us all, that she was not this dayes first beginner, because few or none would have had any courage to follow after her; and therefore the rest yet remaining, are the more to be feared and suspected. Neverthelesse, to avoid the breach of order, and to claime no priviledge by my place, of not performing what I ought to do: prove as it may, a Tale you must have, and thus I proceed.

There lived sometime in the kingdome of France, a Gentleman named Isnarde, being the Count of Roussillion: who because hee was continually weake, crazie, and sickly, kept a Physitian daily in his house, who was called Master Gerard of Narbona. Count Isnarde had one onely Sonne, very young in yeares, yet of towardly hope, faire, comely, and of pleasing person, named Bertrand; with whom, many other children of his age, had their education: and among them, a daughter of the fore-named Physitian, called Juliet; who, even in these tender yeares, fixed her affection upon young Bertrand, with such an earnest and intimate resolution, as was most admirable in so yong a Maiden, and more then many times is noted in yeares of greater discretion. Old Count Isnarde dying, young Bertrand fell as a Ward to the King, and being sent to Paris, remained there under his royall custodie and protection, to the no little discomfort of young Juliet, who became greevously afflicted in minde, because she had lost the company of Bertrand.

Within some few yeares after, the Physitian her Father also dyed, and then her desires grew wholly addicted, to visite Paris her selfe in person, onely because she would see the young Count, awaiting but time and opportunitie, to fit her stolne journey thither. But her kindred and friends, to whose care and trust she was committed, in regard of her rich dowrie, and being left as a fatherlesse Orphane: were so circumspect of her walks and daily behaviour, as she could not compasse any meanes of escaping. Her yeares made her now almost fit for marriage, which so much more encreased her love to the Count, making refusall of many woorthy husbands, and laboured by the motions of her friends and kindred, yet all denyed, they not knowing any reason for her refusalles. By this time the Count was become a gallant goodly Gentleman, and able to make election of his wife, whereby her affections were the more violently enflamed, as fearing least some other should be preferred before her, and so her hopes be utterly disappointed.

It was noysed abroad by common report, that the King of France was in a very dangerous condition, by reason of a strange swelling on his stomacke, which failing of apt and convenient curing, became a Fistula, afflicting him daily with extraordinary paine and anguish, no Chirurgeon or Physitian being found, that could minister any hope of healing, but rather encreased the greefe, and drove it to more vehement extreamitie, compelling the King, as dispairing utterly of all helpe, to give over any further counsell or advice. Heereof faire Juliet was wondrously joyfull, as hoping that this accident would prove the meanes, not onely of her journey to Paris, but if the disease were no more then she imagined; she could easily cure it, and thereby compasse Count Bertrand to be her husband. Hereupon, quickning up her wits, with remembrance of those rules of Art, which (by long practise and experience) she had learned of her skilfull Father, she compounded certaine hearbes together, such as she knew fitting for that kinde of infirmity, and having reduced her compound into powder, away she rode forthwith to Paris.

Being there arrived, all other serious matters set aside, first shee must needs have a sight of Count Bertrand, as being the onely Saint that caused her pilgrimage. Next she made meanes for her accesse to the King, humbly entreating his Majesty, to vouchsafe her the sight of his Fistula. When the King saw her, her modest lookes did plainely deliver, that she was a faire, comely, and discreete young Gentlewoman; wherefore, he would no longer hide it, but layed it open to her view. When shee had seene and felt it, presently she put the King in comfort; affirming, that she knew her selfe able to cure his Fistula, saying: Sir, if your Highnesse will referre the matter to me, without any perill of life, or any the least paine to your person, I hope (by the helpe of heaven) to make you whole and sound within eight dayes space. The King hearing her words, beganne merrily to smile at her, saying: How is it possible for thee, being a yong Maiden, to do that which the best Physitians in Europe, are not able to performe? I commend thy kindnesse, and will not remaine unthankefull for thy forward willingnesse: but I am fully determined, to use no more counsell, or to make any further triall of Physicke or Chirurgery. Whereto faire Juliet thus replyed: Great King, let not my skill and experience be despised, because I am young, and a Maiden; for my profession is not Physicke, neither do I undertake the ministering thereof, as depending on mine owne knowledge; but by the gracious assistance of heaven, and some rules of skilfull observation, which I learned of reverend Gerard of Narbona, who was my worthy Father, and a Physitian of no meane fame, all the while he lived.

At the hearing of these words, the King began somewhat to admire at her gracious carriage, and saide within himselfe. What know I, whether this Virgin is sent to me by the direction of heaven, or no? Why should I disdaine to make proofe of her skill? Her promise is, to cure me in a small times compasse, and without any paine or affliction to me: she shall not come so farre, to returne againe with the losse of her labour, I am resolved to try her cunning, and thereon saide. Faire Virgin, if you cause me to breake my setled determination, and faile of curing me, what can you expect to follow thereon? Whatsoever great King (quoth she) shall please you. Let me be strongly guarded, yet not hindered, when I am to prosecute the businesse: and then if I do not perfectly heale you within eight daies, let a good fire be made, and therein consume my body unto ashes. But if I accomplish the cure, and set your Highnesse free from all further greevance, what recompence then shall remaine to me?

Much did the King commend the confident perswasion which she had of her owne power, and presently replyed. Faire beauty (quoth he) in regard that thou art a Maide and unmaried, if thou keepe promise, and I finde my selfe to be fully cured: I will match thee with some such Gentleman in marriage, as shall be of honourable and worthy reputation, with a sufficient dowry beside. My gracious Soveraigne saide she, willing am I, and most heartily thankfull withall, that your Highnesse shall bestow me in marriage: but I desire then, to have such a husband, as I shall desire or demand by your gracious favour, without presuming to crave any of your Sonnes, Kindred, or Alliance, or appertaining unto your Royal blood. Whereto the King gladly granted. Young Juliet began to minister her Physicke, and within fewer dayes then her limited time, the King was sound and perfectly cured; which when he perceived, he saide unto her. Trust me vertuous Mayde, most woorthily hast thou wonne a Husband, name him, and thou shalt have him. Royall King (quoth she) then have I won the Count Bertrand of Roussillion, whom I have most entirely loved from mine Infancy, and cannot (in my soule) affect any other. Very loath was the King to grant her the young Count, but in regard of his solemne passed promise, and his royal word engaged, which he would not by any meanes breake; he commanded, that the Count should be sent for, and spake thus to him.

Noble Count, it is not unknowne to us, that you are a Gentleman of great honour, and it is our Royall pleasure, to discharge your wardship, that you may repaire home to your owne House, there to settle your affaires in such order, as you may be the readier to enjoy a Wife, which we intend to bestowe upon you. The Count returned his Highnesse most humble thankes, desiring to know of whence, and what she was? It is this Gentlewoman, answered the King, who (by the helpe of Heaven) hath beene the meanes to save my life. Well did the Count know her, as having very often before seene her; and although she was very faire and amiable, yet in regard of her meane birth, which he held as a disparagement to his Nobility in blood; he made a scorne of her, and spake thus to the King. Would your Highnesse give me a Quacksalver to my Wife, one that deales in drugges and Physicarie? I hope I am able to bestowe my selfe much better then so. Why? quoth the King, wouldst thou have us breake our faith; which for the recovery of our health, we have given to this vertuous virgin, and she will have no other reward, but onely Count Bertrand to be her husband? Sir, replied the Count, you may dispossesse me of all that is mine, because I am your Ward and Subject, and any where else you may bestow me: but pardon me to tell you, that this marriage cannot be made with any liking or allowance of mine, neither will I ever give consent thereto.

Sir, saide the King, it is our will that it shall be so, vertuous she is, faire and wise; she loveth thee most affectionately, and with her mayest thou lead a more Noble life, then with the greatest Lady in our Kingdome. Silent, and discontented stoode the Count, but the King commanded preparation for the marriage; and when the appointed time was come, the Count (albeit against his will) received his wife at the Kings hand; she loving him deerly as her owne life. When all was done, the Count requested of the King, that what else remained for further solemnization of the marriage, it might be performed in his owne Country, reserving to himselfe what else he intended. Being mounted on horseback, and humbly taking their leave of the King, the Count would not ride home to his owne dwelling, but into Tuscany, where he heard of a warre betweene the Florentines and the Senesi, purposing to take part with the Florentines, to whom he was willingly and honourably welcommed, being created Captaine of a worthy Company, and continuing there a long while in service.

The poore forsaken new married Countesse, could scarsely be pleased with such dishonourable unkindnesse, yet governing her impatience with no meane discretion, and hoping by her vertuous carriage, to compasse the meanes of his recall: home she rode to Roussillion, where all the people received her very lovingly. Now, by reason of the Counts so long absence, all things were there farre out of order; mutinies, quarrels, and civill dissentions, having procured many dissolute irruptions, to the expence of much blood in many places. But she, like a jolly stirring Lady, very wise and provident in such disturbances, reduced all occasions to such civility againe, that the people admired her rare behaviour, and condemned the Count for his unkindnesse towards her.

After that the whole Country of Roussillion (by the policy and wisedome of this worthy Lady) was fully reestablished in their ancient liberties; she made choise of two discreet knights, whom she sent to the Count her husband, to let him understand, that if in displeasure to her, hee was thus become a stranger to his owne Country: upon the returne of his answer, to give him contentment, she would depart thence, and by no meanes disturbe him. Roughly and churlishly he replied; Let her do as she list, for I have no determination to dwell with her, or neere where she is. Tell her from me, when she shall have this Ring, which you behold heere on my finger, and a Sonne in her armes begotten by me; then will I come live with her, and be her love. The Ring he made most precious and deere account of, and never tooke it off from his finger, in regard of an especiall vertue and property, which he well knew to be remaining in it. And these two Knights, hearing the impossibility of these two strict conditions, with no other favour else to be derived from him; sorrowfully returned backe to their Lady, and acquainted her with this unkinde answer, as also his unalterable determination, which well you may conceive, must needs be very unwelcome to her.

After she had an indifferent while considered with her selfe, her resolution became so undauntable; that she would adventure to practise such meanes, whereby to compasse those two apparant impossibilities, and so to enjoy the love of her husband. Having absolutely concluded what was to be done, she assembled all the cheefest men of the country, revealing unto them (in mournfull manner) what an attempt she had made already, in hope of recovering her husbands favour, and what a rude answer was thereon returned. In the end, she told them, that it did not sute with her unworthinesse, to make the Count live as an exile from his owne inheritance, upon no other inducement, but onely in regard of her: wherefore, she had determined betweene heaven and her soule, to spend the remainder of her dayes in Pilgrimages and prayers, for preservation of the Counts soule and her owne; earnestly desiring them, to undertake the charge and government of the Country, and signifying unto the Count, how she had forsaken his house, and purposed to wander so farre thence, that never would she visit Roussillion any more. In the deliverie of these words, the Lords and Gentlemen wept and sighed extraordinarily, using many earnest imprecations to alter this resolve in her, but all was in vaine.

Having taken her sad and sorrowfull farewell of them all, accompanied onely with her Maide, and one of her Kinsmen, away she went, attired in a Pilgrimes habit, yet well furnished with money and precious Jewels, to avoyde all wants which might befall her in travaile; not acquainting any one whether she went. In no place stayed she, untill she was arrived at Florence, where happening into a poore Widdowes house, like a poore Pilgrime, she seemed well contented therewith. And desiring to heare some tydings of the Count, the next day shee saw him passe by the house on horse-backe, with his company. Now, albeit shee knew him well enough, yet shee demanded of the good old Widdow, what Gentleman he was? She made answer, that he was a stranger there, yet a Nobleman, called Count Bertrand of Roussillion, a very courteous Knight, beloved and much respected in the City. Moreover, that he was farre in love with a neighbour of hers, a young Gentlewoman, but very poore and meane in substance, yet of honest life, vertuous, and never taxed with any evill report: onely her poverty was the maine imbarment of her marriage, dwelling in house with her mother, who was a wise, honest, and worthy Lady.

The Countesse having well observed her words, and considered thereon from point to point; debating soberly with her owne thoughts, in such a doubtfull case what was best to be done. When she had understood which was the house, the ancient Ladies name, and likewise her daughters, to whom her husband was now so affectionately devoted; she made choise of a fit and convenient time, when (in her Pilgrimes habit) secretly she went to the house. There she found the mother and daughter in poore condition, and with as poore a family: whom after she had ceremoniously saluted, she told the old Lady, that she requested but a little conference with her. The Lady arose, and giving her kinde entertainement, they went together into a withdrawing Chamber, where being both set downe, the Countesse began in this manner.

Madame, in my poore opinion, you are not free from the frownes of Fortune, no more then I my selfe am: but if you were so well pleased, there is no one that can comfort both our calamities in such manner, as you are able to do. And beleeve me answered the Lady, there is nothing in the world that can be so welcome to me, as honest comfort. The Countesse proceeding on in her former speeches said: I have now need (good Madame) both of your trust and fidelity, whereon if I should rely, and you faile me, it will be your owne undoing as well as mine. Speake then boldly, replied the old Lady, and remaine constantly assured, that you shall no way be deceived by me. Hereupon, the Countesse declared the whole course of her love, from the very originall to the instant, revealing also what she was, and the occasion of her comming thither, relating every thing so perfectly, that the Lady verily beleeved her, by some reports which she had formerly heard, and which mooved her the more to compassion. Now, when all circumstances were at full discovered, thus spake the Countesse.

Among my other miseries and misfortunes, which hath halfe broken my heart in the meere repetition, beside the sad and afflicting sufferance; two things there are, which if I cannot compasse to have, all hope is quite frustrate for ever, of gaining the grace of my Lord and Husband. Yet these two things may I obtaine by your helpe, if all be true which I have heard, and you can therein best resolve mee. Since my comming to this City, it hath credibly bene told me, that the Count my husband, is deeply in love with your daughter. If the Count (quoth the Ladie) love my daughter, and have a wife of his owne, he must thinke, and so shall surely finde it, that his greatnesse is no priviledge for him, whereby to worke dishonour upon her poverty. But indeede, some apparances there are, and such a matter as you speake of, may be so presumed; yet so farre from a very thought of entertaining in her or me; as whatsoever I am able to doe, to yeeld you any comfort and content, you shall find me therein both willing and ready: for I prize my daughters spotlesse poverty at as high a rate, as he can doe the pride of his honour.

Madame, quoth the Countesse, most heartily I thanke you. But before I presume any further on your kindnesse, let me first tell you, what faithfully I intend to do for you, if I can bring my purpose to effect. I see that your daughter is beautifull, and of sufficient yeeres for marriage; and is debarred thereof (as I have heard) onely by lack of a competent dowry. Wherefore Madame, in recompence of the favour I expect from you, I will enrich her with so much ready money as you shall thinke sufficient to match her in the degree of honour. Poverty made the poore Lady, very well to like of such a bountifull offer, and having a noble heart shee said: Great Countesse say, wherein am I able to do you any service, as can deserve such a gracious offer? If the action be honest; without blame or scandall to my poore, yet undetected reputation, gladly I will do it; and it being accomplished, let the requitall rest in your owne noble nature.

Observe me then Madame, replied the Countesse. It is most convenient for my purpose, that by some trusty and faithfull messenger, you should advertise the Count my husband, that your daughter is, and shall be at his command: but that she may remaine absolutely assured, that his love is constant to her, and above all other: shee must entreat him, to send her (as a testimony thereof) the Ring which he weareth upon his little finger, albeit shee hath heard, that he loveth it deerly. If he send the Ring, you shall give it me, and afterward send him word, that your daughter is ready to accomplish his pleasure; but, for the more safety and secrecie, he must repaire hither to your house, where I being in bed insteed of your daughter, faire Fortune may so favour mee, that (unknowne to him) I may conceive with childe. Upon which good successe, when time shall serve, having the Ring on my finger, and a childe in my armes begotten by him, his love and liking may be recovered, and (by your meanes) I continue with my Husband, as every vertuous Wife ought to doe.

The good old Lady imagined, that this was a matter somewhat difficult, and might lay a blamefull imputation on her daughter. Neverthelesse, considering, what an honest office it was in her, to bee the meanes, whereby so worthy a Countesse should recover an unkinde husband, led altogether by lust, and not a jot of cordiall love; she knew the intent to be honest, the Countesse vertuous, and her promise religious, and therefore undertooke to effect it. Within few dayes after, verie ingeniously, and according to the instructed order, the Ring was obtayned, albeit much against the Counts will; and the Countesse, in sted of the Ladies vertuous daughter, was embraced by him in bed: the houre proving so auspicious, and Juno being Lady of the ascendent, conjoyned with the witty Mercury, shee conceived of two goodly Sonnes, and her deliverance agreed correspondently with the just time.

Thus the old Lady, not at this time onely, but at many other meetings besides; gave the Countesse free possession of her husbands pleasures, yet alwayes in such darke and concealed secrecie, as it was never suspected, nor knowne by any but themselves, the Count lying with his owne wife, and disappointed of her whom he more deerely loved. Alwayes at his uprising in the mornings (which usually was before the breake of day, for preventing the least scruple of suspicion) many familiar conferences passed betweene them, with the gifts of divers faire and costly Jewels; all which the Countesse carefully kept, and perceiving assuredly, that shee was conceived with childe, shee would no longer bee troublesome to the good old Lady; but calling her aside, spake thus to her. Madame, I must needes give thankes to heaven and you, because my desires are amply accomplished, and both time and your deserts doe justly challenge, that I should accordingly quite you before my departure. It remaineth now in your owne power, to make what demand you please of me, which yet I will not give you by way of reward, because that would seeme to bee base and mercenary: but onely whatsoever you shall receive of me, is in honourable recompence of faire and vertuous deservings, such as any honest and well-minded Lady in the like distresse, may with good credit allow, and yet no prejudice to her reputation.

Although poverty might well have tutored the Ladies tongue, to demand a liberall recompence for her paines; yet shee requested but an 100 pounds, as a friendly helpe towards her daughters marriage, and that with a bashfull blushing was uttered too; yet the Countesse gave her five hundred pounds, besides so many rich and costly Jewels, as amounted to a farre greater summe. So shee returned to her wonted lodging, at the aged widdowes house, where first shee was entertained at her comming to Florence; and the good old Lady, to avoyde the Counts repairing to her house any more, departed thence sodainly with her daughter, to divers friends of hers that dwelt in the Country, whereat the Count was much discontented; albeit afterward, he did never heare any more tidings of hir or her daughter, who was worthily married, to her Mothers great comfort.

Not long after, Count Bertrand was recalled home by his people: and he having heard of his wives absence, went to Roussillion so much the more willingly. And the Countesse knowing her husbands departure from Florence, as also his safe arrivall at his owne dwelling, remained still in Florence, untill the time of her deliverance, which was of two goodly Sonnes, lively resembling the lookes of their Father, and all the perfect lineaments of his body. Perswade your selves, she was not a little carefull of their nursing; and when she saw the time answerable to her determination, she tooke her journey (unknowne to any) and arrived with them at Montpellier, where she rested her selfe for divers dayes, after so long and wearisome a journey.

Upon the day of all Saints, the Count kept a solemne Feastivall, for the assembly of his Lords, Knights, Ladies, and Gentlewomen: upon which Joviall day of generall rejoycing, the Countesse attired in her wonted Pilgrimes weed, repaired thither, entring into the great Hall where the Tables were readily covered for dinner. Preassing through the throng of people, with her two children in her armes, she presumed unto the place where the Count sate, and falling on her knees before him, the teares trickling abundantly downe her cheekes, thus she spake. Worthy Lord, I am thy poore, despised, and unfortunate wife; who, that thou mightst returne home, and not be an exile from thine owne abiding, have thus long gone begging through the world. Yet now at length, I hope thou wilt be so honourably-minded, as to performe thine owne too strict imposed conditions, made to the two Knights which I sent unto thee, and which (by thy command) I was enjoyned to do. Behold here in mine armes, not onely one Sonne by thee begotten, but two Twins, and thy Ring beside. High time is it now, if men of honour respect their promises, and after so long and tedious travell, I should at last be welcommed as thy true wife.

The Count hearing this, stoode as confounded with admiration; for full well he knew the Ring: and both the children were so perfectly like him, as he was confirmed to be their Father by generall judgement. Upon his urging by what possible meanes this could be brought to passe: the Countesse in presence of the whole assembly, and unto her eternall commendation, related the whole history, even in such manner as you have formerly heard it. Moreover, she reported the private speeches in bed, uttered betweene himselfe and her, being witnessed more apparantly, by the costly Jewels there openly shewne. All which infallible proofes, proclaiming his shame, and her most noble carriage to her husband; he confessed, that she had told nothing but the truth in every point which she had reported.

Commending her admirable constancy, excellency of wit, and sprightly courage, in making such a bold adventure; he kissed the two sweete boyes, and to keepe his promise, whereto he was earnestly importuned, by all his best esteemed friends there present, especially the honourable Ladies, who would have no deniall, but by forgetting his former harsh and uncivill carriage towards her, to accept her for ever as his lawfull wife, folding her in his armes, and sweetly kissing her divers times together, he bad her welcome to him, as his vertuous, loyall, and most loving wife, and so (for ever after) he would acknowledge her. Well knew hee that she had store of better beseeming garments in the house, and therefore requested the Ladies to walke with her to her Chamber, to uncase her of those Pilgrimes weeds, and cloath her in her owne more sumptuous garments, even those which shee wore on her wedding day, because that was not the day of his contentment, but onely this; for now he confessed her to be his wife indeede, and now he would give the king thanks for her, and now was Count Bertrand truly married to the faire Juliet of Narbona.

THE TENTH NOVEL

ALIBECH turns hermit, and a monk, Rustico, teaches her to put the Devil in Hell. Afterwards she is brought home, and married to Neerbale.

DIONEUS listened attentively to the Queen's discourse, and when she had done and he knew that only he remained to complete the day's entertainment, without trifling away the time or awaiting a command from the Queen, thus he began.

Gracious ladies, it may be you have not heard how the Devil is put in Hell. Therefore, and since it will not be far off the subject of this day's discourse, I will tell it you. Perhaps, hearing it, you may the better understand that albeit Love more affects gay palaces and luxurious bowers than the cabins of the poor, yet he by no means disdains to manifest his power even in the depths of the forest, on stark mountains and in the caves of the desert; and thus we must acknowledge that all things wheresoever they be are subject to him.

Coming, then, to my story, I must tell you that in Capsa, a city of Barbary, there dwelt aforetime a very rich man, who had among several children a little daughter, fair and of a docile temper, whose name was Alibech.

This girl, a heathen in a place where many were Christian, used often to hear her neighbours extol the Christian faith and devotion to the service of God; wherefore she asked one of them how God could best be served and with the least hindrance. She was told that they best served Him who removed themselves farthest from the things of the world, as in particular the hermits who had withdrawn from the city to the wilds of Thebais.

The simple maiden, aged perhaps some fourteen years, moved rather by a childish whim than any real vocation, set out on the morrow alone and telling nobody to walk into the desert. So firmly was she resolved that after several days of hardship she reached the wilderness of Thebais. From afar she descried a little hut, and coming up to it, found there a holy man. Amazed to see such a one there, he asked what she came to seek. Her answer was that, aspiring towards God, she came thither to serve Him, and in the hope of finding a teacher to that end.

The pious hermit, seeing her so young and fair, was afraid lest the Devil might ensnare him; so he praised her intent, and giving her roots, wild apples and dates to eat and a draught of water, said: "Daughter, not far from here there dwells a holy man such as thou seekest: a fitter man than I. Go thou to him." And he put her on the way.

The second hermit advised her as the first; and faring farther she came to the cell of a young hermit, a very pious and righteous man, whose name was Rustico. To him she repeated her mission. Willing to put his resolution to so great a test, he forebore to send her away, and took her into his cell. At nightfall he made her a bed of palm-leaves, and bade her lie down to rest.

Temptations did not long delay an assault on his constancy; and finding it much beyond his strength to withstand them, he soon gave up the battle, and confessed himself worsted. So putting away all saintly thoughts, prayers and mortifications, he let his mind dwell on the freshness and beauty of his companion. From this he passed to thinking of the best means of bringing her to his desires without giving her cause to suspect him of lewdness.

Therefore, satisfying himself by a few questions that she had never had carnal knowledge of a man, and was indeed as innocent as she seemed, he thought of a plan to enjoy her under colour of serving

God. He began expounding to her the Devil's enmity to the Almighty, and went on to impress upon her that the most acceptable service she could render to God would be to put the Devil in Hell, whereto the Lord had condemned him.

The little maid asked him how this might be done. "Thou shalt soon learn," replied Rustico, "only do as thou seest me do." Thereupon he took off what few clothes he wore, and stood stark naked; and as soon as the girl had done likewise he fell on his knees as though to pray, and made her kneel face to face with him.

This done, Rustico's desire was more than ever inflamed at the sight of her beauty, and the resurrection of the flesh came to pass. Seeing this, and not knowing what it meant, Alibech asked: "Rustico, what is it thou hast that thrusts itself out in front, and that I have not?" "My daughter," quoth Rustico, "it is that same Devil of whom I have been telling thee. Dost thou mark him? Behold, he gives me such sore trouble that I can hardly bear it."

"The Lord be praised!" said she; "for now I see that I am more blessed than thou in that I have not this Devil."

Rustico retorted: "Thou sayest truly; but thou hast another thing that I have not, and hast it in place of this."

"What is that?" says Alibech.

To this Rustico replied: "Thou hast Hell; and I will tell thee my belief that God gave it thee for the health of my soul. For, if thou wilt take pity on me for the troubling of this Devil, and suffer me to put him in Hell, thou wilt comfort me extremely, and at the same time please and serve God in the highest measure; to which end, as thou sayest, thou art come hither."

All unsuspecting, the girl answered him: "My father, since I have this Hell, let the thing be done when thou desirest it."

Then Rustico said: "Bless thee, my dear daughter; let us go at once and put him in his place, that I may be at peace."

So saying, he laid her on one of their rough beds, and set about showing her how to shut the accursed one in his prison. The girl, who until then had no experience of putting devils in Hell, felt some pain at this first trial of it; which made her say to Rustico: "Father, this Devil must indeed be wicked, and in very sooth an enemy of God, for he hurts Hell itself, let alone other things, when he is put back in it."

"My daughter," said Rustico, "it will not always be so." And to make sure of it, before either of them moved from the bed they put him in six times, after which the Devil hung his head and was glad to let them be.

But in the succeeding days he rose up many times; and the girl, always disposing herself to subdue him, began to take pleasure in the exercise, and to say such things as: "I see now the truth of what the good folk in Capsa told me, that serving God is a delight; for I never remember doing anything that gave me as much joy and pleasure as this putting the Devil in Hell. So I think the people who spend their time otherwise than in serving God must be very foolish."

Often she would come to Rustico and say: "Father, I came hither to serve God, not to stand idle. Let us go put the Devil in Hell." And once, when it had been done, she asked: "Rustico, why does he want to get out of Hell? If only he would stay there as willingly as Hell takes him in and holds him, he would never want to come out at all." By thus constantly egging him on and exhorting him to God's service the girl so preyed upon Rustico that he shivered with cold when another man would have sweated. He had perforce to tell her that it was not just to punish the Devil by putting him in Hell save when he had lifted his head in pride; and that by God's mercy they had so chastened him that he only implored Heaven to be left in peace. Thus for a time he silenced her.

But she, finding that Rustico did not call on her to put the Devil in Hell, said one day: "Even though your Devil is punished and no longer troubles you, my Hell gives me no peace. You will do a charity if with your Devil you will quiet the raging of my Hell, as with my Hell I tamed the pride of your Devil." To these demands Rustico on a diet of herbs and water could ill respond; and he told her that to appease Hell would need too many devils, none the less he would do all that in him lay. At times he could satisfy her, but so seldom that it was like feeding an elephant with peas. Therefore the girl thought she was not serving God as well as she would like, and she grumbled most of the time.

Whilst things stood thus amiss between Rustico's Devil and Alibech's Hell, for overmuch eagerness of the one part and too little performance of the other, a fire broke out in Capsa and burned the father of Alibech with his children and every one of his kin, so that Alibech became the sole heiress to his goods. Whereupon a certain Neerbale, a young man who had wasted his patrimony in high living, sought for Alibech in the belief that she was alive, and succeeded in finding her before the Court had declared her father's goods forfeit as being without an owner. Much to the relief of Rustico and against the girl's will, Neerbale brought her back to Capsa and married her, so becoming entitled in her right to a large fortune.

One day, when as yet Neerbale had not lain with her, some of her women asked how she had served God in the desert. She replied that she had served Him by putting the Devil in Hell, and that Neerbale had committed a grievous sin in taking her from such pious work. Then they asked: "How is the Devil put in Hell?" To which the girl answered with words and gestures showing how it had been done. The women laughed so heartily that they have not done laughing yet, and said to her: "Grieve not, my child; that is done as well here. Neerbale will serve God right well with thee in this way."

As one repeated the words to another throughout the town, it became a familiar saying that the most acceptable of all services to God is to put the Devil in Hell. The saying has crossed the sea and become current among us, as it still is.

Wherefore, young ladies, I beseech you if you would deserve Heaven's grace, lend yourselves to the putting of the Devil in Hell; for it is a thing beloved of God, pleasing to the participants, and one from which much good comes and ensues.

A thousand times and more were the chaste ladies moved to laughter by Dioneus's novel, so much were his phrases to their liking. And the Queen perceiving that as his tale was ended, her office had expired, took the crown of laurel from her head and graciously placed it on the head of Philostratus, saying: "Now we shall see whether the wolf will rule the sheep better than the sheep ruled the wolves." At this Philostratus laughed, and retorted: "If I had my way, the wolves would have taught the sheep to put the Devil in Hell, no less well than Rustico taught Alibech. Since we did not, call us not wolves, for ye were no sheep. Howbeit, I will reign as best I may, seeing ye have laid the trust on me."

Neiphila cried out: "Mark this, Philostratus; in trying to teach us you might have had such a lesson as Masetto di Lamporechio had of the nuns, and recovered your speech just as your bare bones had learned to whistle without a master." Finding himself thus evenly matched, Philostratus ceased his pleasantries; and beginning to consider on the charge committed to his care, called the Master of the houshold, to know in what estate all matters were, because where any defect appeared, every thing might be the sooner remedied, for the better satisfaction of the company, during the time of his authority. Then returning backe to the assembly, thus he began. Lovely Ladies, I would have you to know, that since the time of ability in me, to distinguish betweene good and evill, I have alwayes bene subject (perhaps by the meanes of some beauty heere among us) to the proud and imperious dominion of love, with expression of all duty, humility, and most intimate desire to please: yet all hath prooved to no purpose, but still I have bin rejected for some other, whereby my condition hath falne from ill to worse, and so still it is likely, even to the houre of my death. In which respect, it best pleaseth me, that our conferences to morrow, shall extend to no other argument, but only such cases as are most conformable to my calamity, namely of such, whose love hath had unhappy ending, because I await no other issue of mine; nor willingly would I be called by any other name, but only, the miserable and unfortunate Lover.

Having thus spoken, he arose againe; granting leave to the rest, to recreate themselves till supper time. The Garden was very faire and spacious, affoording large limits for their severall walkes; the Sun being already so low descended, that it could not be offensive to any one, the Connies, Kids, and young Hindes skipping every where about them, to their no meane pleasure and contentment, Dioneus and Fiammetta, sate singing together, of Messire Guiglielmo, and the Lady of Vertue. Philomena and Pamphilus playing at the Chesse, all sporting themselves as best they pleased. But the houre of Supper being come, and the Tables covered about the faire fountaine, they sate downe and supt in most loving manner. Then Philostratus, not to swerve from the course which had beene observed by the Queenes before him, so soone as the Tables were taken away, gave commaund, that Madam Lauretta should beginne the dance, and likewise to sing a Song. My gracious Lord (quoth she) I can skill of no other Songs, but onely a peece of mine owne, which I have already learned by heart, and may well beseeme this assembly: if you please to allow of that, I am ready to performe it with all obedience. Lady, replyed the King, you your selfe being so faire and lovely, so needs must be whatsoever commeth from you, therefore let us heare such as you have. Madam Lauretta, giving enstruction to the Chorus prepared, and began in this manner.

THE SONG

No soule so comfortlesse,
Hath more cause to expresse,
Like woe and heavinesse,
As I poore amorous Maide.

He that did forme the Heavens and every Starre,
Made me as best him pleased,
Lovely and gracious, no Element at jarre,
Or else in gentle breasts to moove sterne Warre,
But to have strifes appeased
Where Beauties eye should make the deepest scarre.
And yet when all things are confest,
Never was any soule distrest,
Like my poore amorous Maide.
No soule so comfortlesse, etc.

There was a time, when once I was held deare,
Blest were those happy dayes:
Numberlesse Love suites whispred in mine eare,
All of faire hope, but none of desperate feare;
And all sung Beauties praise.
Why should blacke cloudes obscure so bright a cleare?
And why should others swimme in joy,
And no heart drowned in annoy,
Like mine poore amorous Maide?
No soule so comfortlesse, etc.

Well may I curse that sad and dismall day,
When in unkinde exchange;
Another Beauty did my hopes betray,
And stole my dearest Love from me away:
Which I thought very strange,
Considering vowes were past, and what else may
Assure a loyall Maidens trust.
Never was Lover so unjust,
Like mine poore amorous Maide.
No soule so comfortlesse, etc.
Come then kinde Death, and finish all my woes,
Thy helpe is now the best.

Come lovely Nymphes, lend hands mine eyes to
close,
And let him wander wheresoere he goes,
Vaunting of mine unrest;
Beguiling others by his treacherous showes.
Grave on my Monument,
No true love was worse spent,
Then mine poore amorous Maide.
No soule so comfortlesse, etc.

So did Madam Lauretta finish her Song, which being well observed of them all, was understood by some in divers kinds: some alluding it one way, and others according to their owne apprehensions, but all consenting that both it was an excellent Ditty, well devised, and most sweetly sung. Afterward, lighted Torches being brought, because the Stars had already richly spangled all the heavens, and the fit houre of rest approaching: the King commanded them all to their Chambers, where we meane to leave them untill the next morning.

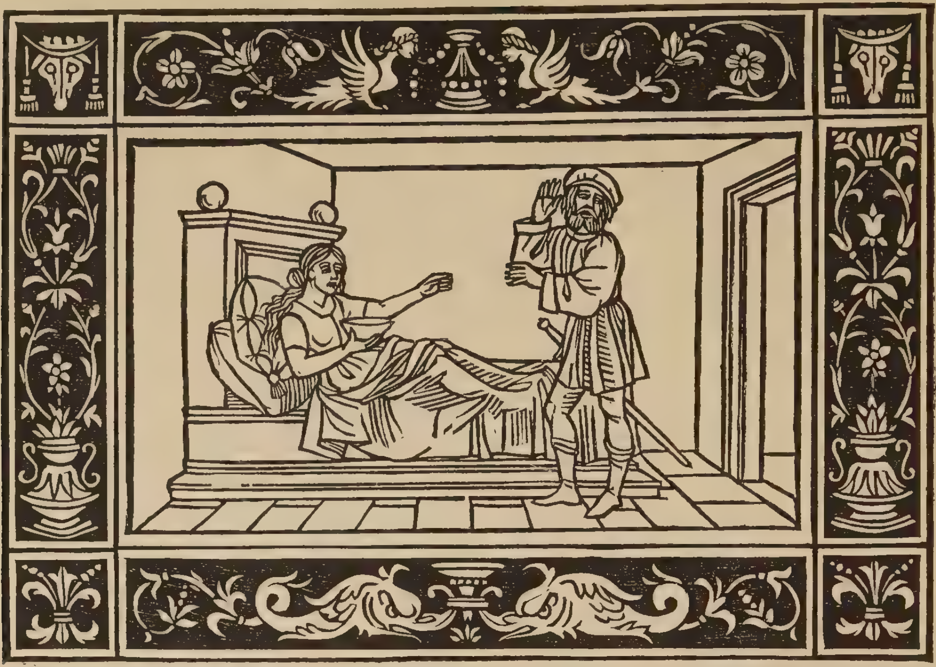
THE FOURTH DAY

WHEREIN ALL THE SEVERALL DISCOURSES, ARE UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF HONOURABLE PHILOSTRATUS: AND CONCERNING SUCH PERSONS, WHOSE LOVES HAVE HAD SUCCESSELESSE ENDING.

Most worthy Ladies, I have alwayes heard, as well by the sayings of the judicious, as also by mine owne observation and reading, that the impetuous and violent windes of envy, do sildome blow turbulently, but on the highest Towers and tops of the trees most eminently advanced. Yet (in mine opinion) I have found my selfe much deceived; because, by striving with my very uttermost endeavour, to shunne the outrage of those implacable winds; I have laboured to go, not onely by plaine and even pathes but likewise through the deepest vallies. As very easily may be seene and observed in the reading of these few small Novels, which I have written not only in our vulgar Florentine prose, without any ambitious title: but also in a most humble stile, so low and gentle as possibly I could. And although I have bene rudely shaken, yea, almost halfe unrooted, by the extreame agitation of those blustering winds, and torne in peeces by that base back-biter, Envy: yet have I not (for all that) discontinued, or broken any part of mine intended enterprize. Wherefore, I can sufficiently witnesse (by mine owne comprehension) the saying so much observed by the wise, to be most true: That nothing is without Envy in this world, but misery onely.

But what shall I say to them, who take so great compassion on my povertie, as they advise me to get some thing, whereon to make my living? Assuredly, I know not what to say in this case, except by due consideration made with my selfe, how they would answer me, if necessitie should drive me to crave kindnesse of them; questionlesse, they would then say: Goe, seeke comfort among thy fables and follies.

But now it is time (bright beauties) to returne whence we parted, and to follow our former order begun, because it may seeme we have wandered too farre. By this time the Sun had chased the Starre-light from the heavens, and the shadie moisture from the ground, when Philostratus the King being risen, all the company arose likewise. When being come into the goodly Garden, they spent the time in varietie of sports, dining where they had supt the night before. And after that the Sunne was at his highest, and they had refreshed their spirits with a little slumbering, they sate downe (according to custome) about the faire Fountaine. And then the King commanded Madam Fiammetta, that she should give beginning to the dayes Novels: when she, without any longer delaying, began:



WHEREIN IS DECLARED THE POWER OF LOVE, AND THEIR CRUILTY JUSTLY REPREHENDED, WHO IMAGINE TO MAKE THE VIGOUR THEREOF CEASE, BY ABUSING OR KILLING ONE OF THE LOVERS.

TANCREDE, *Prince of Salerne, caused the amorous friend of his daughter to bee slaine, and sent her his heart in a cup of Gold: which afterwards she steeped in an impoysoned water, and then drinking it, so dyed.*

OUR King (most Noble and vertuous Ladies) hath this day given us a subject, very rough and stearne to discourse on, and so much the rather, if we consider, that we are come hither to be merry and pleasant, where sad Tragicall reports are no way suteable, especially, by reviving the teares of others, to bedew our owne cheekes withall. Nor can any such argument be spoken of, without moving compassion both in the reporters, and hearers. But (perhaps) it was his Highnesse pleasure, to moderate the delights which we have already had. Or whatsoever else hath provoked him thereto, seeing it is not lawfull for me, to alter or contradict his appointment; I will recount an accident very pittifull, or rather most unfortinate, and well worthy to be graced with our teares.

Tancrede, Prince of Salerne (which City, before the Consulles of Rome held dominion in that part of Italy, stoode free, and thence (perchance) tooke the moderne title of a Principality) was a very humane Lord, and of ingenious nature; if, in his elder yeeres, he had not soiled his hands in the blood of Lovers, especially one of them, being both neere and deere unto him. So it fortuned, that during the whole life time of this Prince, he had but one onely daughter (albeit it had beene much better, if he had had none at all) whom he so choisely loved and esteemed, as never was any childe more deerely affected of a Father: and so farre extended his over-curious respect of her, as he would seldome admit her to be forth of his sight; neither would he suffer her to marry, although she had outstept (by divers yeeres) the age meete for marriage. Neverthelesse, at length, he matched her with the Sonne to the Duke of Capua, who lived no long while with her; but left her in a widdowed estate, and then she returned home to her father againe.

This Lady, had all the most absolute perfections, both of favour and feature, as could be wished in any woman, young, queintly disposed, and of admirable understanding, more (perhappes) then was requisite in so weake a body. Continuing thus in Court with the King her Father, who loved her beyond all his future hopes; like a Lady of great and glorious magnificence, she lived in all delights and pleasure. She well perceiving, that her Father thus exceeding in his affection to her, had no minde at all of re-marrying her, and holding it most immodest in her, to solicite him with any such suite: concluded in her mindes private consultations, to make choise of some one especiall friend or favourite (if Fortune would prove so furtherous to her) whom she might acquaint secretly, with her sober, honest, and familiar purposes. Her Fathers Court being much frequented, with plentifull accesse of brave Gentlemen, and others of inferiour quality, as commonly the Courts of Kings and Princes are, whose carriage and demeanor she very heedfully observed. There was a young Gentleman among all the rest, a servant to her Father, and named Guiscardo, a man not derived from any great descent by blood, yet much more Noble by vertue and commandable behaviour, then appeared in any of the other, none pleased her opinion, like as he did; so that by often noting his parts and perfections, her affections being but a glowing sparke at the first, grew like a Bavin to take flame, yet kept so closely as possibly she could; as Ladies are warie enough in their love.

The young Gentleman, though poore, being neither blocke nor dullard, perceived what he made no outward shew of, and understood himselfe so sufficiently, that holding it no meane happinesse to be affected by her, he thought it very base and cowardly in him, if he should not expresse the like to her againe. So loving mutually (yet secretly) in this maner, and she coveting nothing more, then to have private conference with him, yet not daring to trust any one with so important a matter; at length she devised a new cunning stratageme, to compasse her longing desire, and acquaint him with her private purpose, which proved to be in this manner. She wrote a Letter, concerning what was the next day to be done, for their secret meeting together; and conveying it within the joynt of an hollow Cane, in jesting manner threw it to Guiscardo, saying; Let your man make use of this, insteed of a paire of bellowes, when he meaneth to make fire in your Chamber. Guiscardo taking up the Cane, and considering with himselfe, that neither was it given, or the wordes thus spoken, but doubtlesse on some important occasion: went unto his lodging with the Cane, where viewing it respectively, he found it to be cleft, and opening it with his knife, found there the written Letter enclosed.

After he had reade it, and well considered on the service therein concerned; he was the most joyfull man of the world, and began to contrive his aptest meanes, for meeting with his gracious Mistresse, and according as she had given him direction. In a corner of the Kings Palace, it being seated on a rising hill, a cave had long beene made in the body of the same hill, which received no light into it, but by a small spiracle or vent-loope, made out ingeniously on the hils side. And because it had not beene a long time frequented, by the accesse of any body, that vent-light was over-growne with briars and bushes, which almost engirt it round about. No one could descend into this cave or vault, but only by a secret paire of staires, answering to a lower Chamber of the Palace, and very neere to the Princesse lodging, as being altogether at her command, by meanes of a strong barred and defensible doore, whereby to mount or descend at her pleasure. And both the cave it selfe, as also the degrees conducting downe into it, were now so quite worne out of memory (in regard it had not beene visited by any one in long time before) as no man remembred that there was any such thing.

But Love, from whose bright discerning eies, nothing can be so closely concealed, but at the length it commeth to light, had made this amorous Lady mindefull thereof, and because she would not be discovered in her intention, many dayes together, her soule became perplexed; by what meanes that strong doore might best be opened, before she could compasse to performe it. But after that she had found out the way, and gone downe her selfe alone into the cave; observing the loope-light and had made it commodious for her purpose, she gave knowledge thereof to Guiscardo, to have him devise an apt course for his descent, acquainting him truly with the height, and how farre it was distant from the ground within. After he had found the souspirall in the hils side, and given it a larger entrance for his safer passage; he provided a Ladder of cords, with steppes sufficient for his descending and ascending, as also a wearing sute made of leather, to keepe his skinne unscrached of the thornes, and to avoyde all suspition of his resorting thither. In this manner went he to the saide loope-hole the night following, and having fastened the one end of his corded ladder, to the strong stumpe of a tree being closely by it; by meanes of the saide ladder, he descended downe into the cave, and there attended the comming of his Lady.

She, on the morrow morning, pretending to her waiting woman, that she was scarsly well, and therefore would not be diseased the most part of that day; commanded them to leave her alone in her Chamber, and not to returne untill she called for them, locking the doore her selfe for better security. Then opened she the doore of the cave, and going downe the staires, found there her amorous friend Guiscardo, whom she saluting with a chaste and modest kisse; causing him to ascend up the stayres with her into her Chamber. This long desired, and now obtained meeting, caused the two deerely affected Lovers, in kinde discourse of amorous argument (without incivill or rude demeanor) to spend there the most part of that day, to their hearts joy and mutuall contentment. And having concluded on their often meeting there, in this cunning and concealed sort; Guiscardo went downe into the cave againe, the Princesse making the doore fast after him, and then went forth among her Women. So in the night season, Guiscardo ascended up againe by his Ladder of cords, and covering the loopehole with brambles and bushes, returned (unseene of any) to his owne lodging: the cave being afterward guilty of their often meeting there in this manner.

But Fortune, who hath alwayes bin a fatall enemy to lovers stolne felicities, became envious of their thus secret meeting, and overthrew (in an instant) all their poore happinesse, by an accident most spightfull and malicious. The King had used divers dayes before, after dinner time, to resort all alone to his daughters Chamber, there conversing with her in most loving manner. One unhappy day amongst the rest, when the Princesse, being named Ghismonda, was sporting in her private Garden among her Ladies, the King (at his wonted time) went to his daughters Chamber, being neither heard or seene by any. Nor would he have his daughter called from her pleasure, but finding the windowes fast shut, and the

Curtaines close drawne about the bed; he sate downe in a chaire behind it, and leaning his head upon the bed, his body being covered with the curtaine, as if he hid himselfe purposely; he mused on so many matters, untill at last he fell fast asleepe.

It hath bin observed as an ancient Adage, that when disasters are ordained to any one, commonly they prove to be inevitable, as poore Ghismonda could witnesse too well. For while the King thus slept, she having (unluckily) appointed another meeting with Guiscardo, left hir Gentlewomen in the Garden, and stealing softly into her Chamber, having made all fast and sure, for being descried by any person: opened the doore to Guiscardo, who stood there ready on the staire-head, awaiting his entrance; and they sitting downe on the bed side (according as they were wont to do) began their usuall kinde of conference againe, with sighes and loving kisses mingled among them. It chanced that the King awaked, and both hearing and seeing this familiarity of Guiscardo with his Daughter, he became extreamly confounded with greefe thereat. Once he intended, to cry out for helpe, to have them both there apprehended; but he helde it a part of greater wisedome, to sit silent still, and (if he could) to keepe himselfe so closely concealed: to the end, that he might the more secretly, and with farre lesse disgrace to himselfe, performe what he had rashly intended to do.

The poore discovered Lovers, having ended their amorous interparlance, without suspition of the Kings being so neere in person, or any else, to betray their over-confident trust; Guiscardo descended againe into the Cave, and she leaving the Chamber, returned to her women in the Garden; all which Tancrede too well observed, and in a rapture of fury, departed (unseene) into his owne lodging. The same night, about the houre of mens first sleepe, and according as he had given order; Guiscardo was apprehended, even as he was comming forth of the loope-hole, and in his homely leather habite. Very closely was he brought before the King, whose heart was swolne so great with griefe, as hardly was he able to speake: notwithstanding, at the last he began thus. Guiscardo, the love and respect I have used towards thee, hath not deserved the shamefull wrong which thou hast requited me withall, and as I have seene with mine owne eyes this day. Whereto Guiscardo could answer nothing else, but onely this: Alas my Lord! Love is able to do much more, then either you, or I. Whereupon, Tancrede commanded, that he should be secretly well guarded, in a neere adjoyning Chamber, and on the next day, Ghismonda having (as yet) heard nothing hereof, the Kings braine being infinitely busied and troubled, after dinner, and as he often had used to do: he went to his daughters Chamber, where calling for her, and shutting the doores closely to them, the teares trickling downe his aged white beard, thus he spake to her.

Ghismonda, I was once grounded in a setled perswasion, that I truely knew thy vertue, and honest integrity of life; and this beleefe could never have beene altred in mee, by any sinister reports whatsoever, had not mine eyes seene, and mine eares heard the contrary. Nor did I so much as conceive a thought either of thine affection, or private conversing with any man, but onely he that was to be thy husband. But now, I my selfe being able to avouch thy folly, imagine what an heart-breake this will be to me, so long as life remaineth in this poore, weake, and aged body. Yet, if needes thou must have yeelded to this wanton weaknesse, I would thou hadst made choise of a man, answerable to thy birth and Nobility: whereas on the contrary, among so many worthy spirits as resort to my Court, thou likest best to converse with that silly young man Guiscardo, one of very meane and base descent, and by me (even for Gods sake) from his very youngest yeares, brought up to this instant in my Court; wherein thou hast given me much affliction of minde, and so overthrowne my senses, as I cannot well imagine how I should deale with thee. For him, whom I have this night caused to be surprized, even as he came forth of your close contrived conveyance, and detaine as my prisoner, I have resolved how to proceed with him: but concerning thy selfe, mine oppressions are so many and violent, as I know not what to say of thee. One way, thou hast meerly murthered the unfeigned affection I bare thee, as never any father could expresse more to his childe: and then againe, thou hast kindled a most just indignation in me, by thine immodest and wilfull folly, and whereas Nature pleadeth pardon for the one, yet justice standeth up against the other, and urgeth cruell severity against thee: neverthelesse, before I will determine upon any resolution, I come purposely first to heare thee speake, and what thou canst say for thy selfe, in a bad case, so desperate and dangerous.

Having thus spoken, he hung downe the head in his bosome, weeping as aboundantly, as if he had beene a childe severely disciplinde. On the other side, Ghismonda hearing the speeches of her Father, and perceiving withall, that not onely her secret love was discovered, but also Guiscardo was in close prison, the matter which most of all did torment her; she fell into a very strange kinde of extasie, scorning teares, and entreating tearmes, such as feminine frailety are alwayes aptest unto: but rather, with height of courage, controuling feare or servile basenesse, and declaring invincible fortitude in her very lookes, she concluded with her selfe, rather then to urge any humble perswasions, she would lay her life downe at the stake. For plainely she perceived, that Guiscardo already was a dead man in Law, and death was likewise as welcome to her, rather then the deprivation of her Love; and therefore, not like a weeping woman, or as checkt by the offence committed, but carelesse of any harme happening to her: stoutely and couragiously, not a teare appearing in her eye, or her soule any way to be perturbed, thus she spake to her Father.

Tancrede, to denie what I have done, or to entreate any favour from you, is now no part of my disposition: for as the one can little availe me, so shall not the other any way advantage me. Moreover, I covet not that you should extend any clemency or kindnesse to me, but by my voluntary confession of the truth; do intend (first of all) to defend mine honour, with reasons sound, good, and substantiall, and then vertuously pursue to full effect, the greatnesse of my minde and constant resolution. True it is, that I have loved, and still do, honourable Guiscardo, purposing the like so long as I shall live, which will be but a small while: but if it be possible to continue the same affection after death, it is for ever vowed to him onely. Nor did mine owne womanish weaknesse so much thereto induce me, as the matchlesse vertues shining clearly in Guiscardo, and the little respect you had of marrying me againe. Why royall Father, you cannot be ignorant, that you being composed of flesh and blood, have begotten a Daughter of the selfe same composition, and not made of stone or iron. Moreover, you ought to remember (although now you are farre stept in yeeres) what the Lawes of youth are, and with what difficulty they are to be contradicted. Considering withall, that albeit (during the vigour of your best time) you evermore were exercised in Armes; yet you should likewise understand, that negligence and idle delights, have mighty power, not onely in young people, but also in them of greatest yeares.

I being then made of flesh and blood, and so derived from your selfe; having had also so little benefit of life, that I am yet in the spring, and blooming time of my blood: by either of these reasons, I must needs be subject to naturall desires, wherein such knowledge as I have once already had, in the estate of my marriage, perhaps might move a further intelligence of the like delights, according to the better ability of strength, which exceeding all capacity of resistance, induced a second motive to affection, answerable to my time and youthfull desires, and so (like a yong woman) I became amorous againe; yet did I strive, even with all my utmost might, and best vertuous faculties abiding in me, no way to disgrace either you or my selfe, as (in equall censure) yet have I not done. But Nature is above all humane power, and Love commanded by Nature, hath prevailed for Love, joyning with Fortune: in meere pitty and commiseration of my extreame wrong, I found them both most benigne and gracious, teaching mee a way secret enough, whereby I might reach the height of my desires, howsoever you became instructed, or (perhaps) found it out by accident; so it was, and I deny it not.

Nor did I make election of Guiscardo by chance, or rashly, as many women doe, but by deliberate counsell in my soule, and most mature advise; I chose him above all other, and having his honest harmelesse conversation, mutually we enjoyed our hearts contentment. Now it appeareth, that I have not offended but by love; in imitation of vulgar opinion, rather then truth: you seeke to reprove me bitterly, alleaging no other maine argument for your anger, but onely my not choosing a Gentleman, or one more worthy. Wherein it is most evident, that you do not so much checke my fault, as the ordination of Fortune, who many times advanceth men of meanest esteeme, and abaseth them of greater merit. But leaving this discourse, let us looke into the originall of things, wherein we are first to observe, that from one masse or lumpe of flesh, both we, and all other received our flesh, and one Creator hath created all things; yea, all creatures, equally in their forces and faculties, and equall likewise in their vertue: which vertue was the first that made distinction of birth and equality, in regard, that such as have the most liberall portion thereof, and performed actions thereto answerable, were thereby tearmed noble; all the rest remaining unnoble: now although contrary use did afterward hide and conceale this Law, yet was it not therefore banished from Nature or good manners. In which respect, whosoever did execute all his actions by vertue, declared himselfe openly to be noble; and he that tearmed him otherwise, it was an errour in the miscaller, and not in the person so wrongfully called; as the very same priviledge is yet in full force among us at this day.

Cast an heedfull eye then (good Father) upon all your Gentlemen, and advisedly examine their vertues, conditions, and manner of behaviour. On the other side, observe those parts remaining in Guiscardo: and then if you will judge truly, and without affection, you will confesse him to be most Noble, and that all your Gentlemen (in respect of him) are but base Groomes and villaines. His vertues and excelling perfections, I never credited from the report or judgement of any person; but onely by your speeches, and mine owne eyes as true witnesses. Who did ever more commend Guiscardo, extolling all those singularities in him, most requisite to be in an honest vertuous man; then you your selfe have done? Nor neede you to be sorry, or ashamed of your good opinion concerning him: for if mine eyes have not deceived my judgement, you never gave him the least part of praise, but I have knowne much more in him, then ever your words were able to expresse: wherefore, if I have beene any way deceived, truly the deceit proceeded onely from you. How wil you then maintaine, that I have throwne my liking on a man of base condition? In troth (Sir) you cannot. Perhaps you will alledge, that he is but meane and poore; I confesse it, and surely it is to your shame, that you have not bestowne place of more preferment, on a man so honest and well deserving, and having bene so long a time your servant. Neverthelesse poverty impayreth not any part of noble Nature, but wealth hurries it into horrible confusions. Many Kings and great Princes have heeretofore beene poore, when divers of them that have delved into the earth, and kept Flockes in the field, have beene advanced to riches, and exceeded the other in wealth.

Now, as concerning your last doubt, which most of all afflicteth you, namely, how you shall deale with me; boldly rid your braine of any such disturbance; for if you have resolved now in your extremity of yeres, to doe that which your younger dayes evermore despised, I meane, to become cruell; use your utmost cruelty against me: for I wil never intreat you to the contrary, because I am the sole occasion of this offence, if it doe deserve the name of an offence. And this I dare assure you, that if you deale not with me, as you have done already, or intend to Guiscardo, mine owne hands shall act as much: and therfore give over your teares to women; and if you purpose to be cruel, let him and me in death drinke both of one cup, at least if you imagine that we have deserved it.

The King knew well enough the high spirit of his Daughter, but yet (neverthelesse) he did not beleeve, that her words would prove actions, or she do as she said. And therefore parting from her, and without intent of using any cruelty to her, concluded, by quenching the heat of another to coole the fiery rage of her distemper, commanding two of his followers (who had the custody of Guiscardo) that without any rumour or noise at all, they should strangle him the night ensuing, and taking the heart forth of his body, to bring it to him, which they performed according to their charge. On the next day, the King called for a goodly standing cup of Gold, wherein he put the heart of Guiscardo, sending it by one of his most familiar servants to his Daughter, with command also to use these words to her. Thy Father hath sent thee this present, to comfort thee with that thing which most of all thou affectest, even as thou hast comforted him with that which he most hated.

Ghismonda, nothing altered from her cruell deliberation, after her Father was departed from her, caused certaine poisonous roots and hearbes to be brought her, which shee (by distillation) made a water of, to drinke sodainly, whensoever any crosse accident should come from her Father; whereupon, when the Messenger from her Father had delivered her the present, and uttered the words as he was commaunded: shee tooke the Cup, and looking into it with a setled countenance, by sight of the heart, and effect of the message, she knew certainely, that was the heart of Guiscardo; then looking stearnely on the servant, thus she spake unto him. My honest friend, it is no more then right and justice, that so worthy a heart as this is, should have any worser grave then gold, wherein my Father hath dealt most wisely. So, lifting the heart up to her mouth, and sweetly kissing it, she proceeded thus. In all things, even till this instant, (being the utmost period of my life) I have evermore found my Fathers love most effectuall to me; but now it appeareth farre greater, then at any time heretofore: and therefore from my mouth, thou must deliver him the latest thankes that ever I shall give him, for sending me such an honourable present.

These words being ended, holding the Cup fast in her hand, and looking seriously upon the heart, she began againe in this manner. Thou sweete entertainer of all my dearest delights, accursed be his cruelty, that causeth me thus to see thee with my corporall eyes, it being sufficient enough for me, alwayes to behold thee with the sight of my soule. Thou hast runne thy race, and as Fortune ordained, so are thy dayes finished: for as all flesh hath an ending; so hast thou concluded, albeit too soone, and before thy due time. The travailes and miseries of this World, have now no more to meddle with thee, and thy very heaviest enemy hath bestowed such a grave on thee, as thy greatnesse in vertue worthily deserveth; now nothing else is wanting, wherewith to beautifie thy Funerall, but only her sighes and teares, that was so deare unto thee in thy life time. And because thou mightest the more freely enjoy them, see how my mercilesse Father (on his owne meere motion) hath sent thee to me; and truly I will bestow them frankly on thee, though once I had resolved, to die with drie eyes, and not shedding one teare, dreadlesse of their utmost malice towards me.

And when I have given thee the due oblation of my teares, my soule, which sometime thou hast kept most carfully, shall come to make a sweet conjunction with thine: for in what company else can I travaile more contentedly, and to those unfrequented silent shades, but onely in thine? As yet I am sure it is present here, in this Cup sent me by my Father, as having a provident respect to the place, for possession of our equall and mutuall pleasures; because thy soule affecting mine so truly, cannot walke alone, without his deare companion.

Having thus finished her complaint, even as if her head had been converted into a well spring of water, so did teares abundantly flow from her faire eyes, kissing the heart of Guiscardo infinite times. All which while, her women standing by her, neither knew what heart it was, nor to what effect her speeches tended: but being moved to compassionate teares, they often demanded (albeit in vaine) the occasion of her sad complaining, comforting her to their utmost power. When she was not able to weepe any longer, wiping her eyes, and lifting up her head, without any signe of the least dismay, thus she spake to the heart. Deare heart, all my duty is performed to thee, and nothing now remaineth uneffected; but onely breathing my last, to let my ghost accompany thine.

Then calling for the glasse of water, which she had readily prepared the day before, and powring it upon the heart lying in the Cup, couragiously advancing it to her mouth, she dranke it up every drop; which being done, she lay downe upon her bed, holding her Lovers heart fast in her hand, and laying it so neere to her owne as she could. Now although her women knew not what water it was, yet when they had seene her to quaffe it off in that manner, they sent word to the King, who much suspecting what had happened, went in all haste to his Daughters Chamber, entring at the very instant, when she was laide upon her bed; beholding her in such passionate pangs, with teares streaming downe his reverend beard, he used many kinde words to comfort her: when boldly thus she spake unto him. Father (quoth she) well may you spare these teares, because they are unfitting for you, and not any way desired by me; who but your selfe, hath seene any man to mourne for his owne wilfull offence. Neverthelesse, if but the least jot of that love do yet abide in you, whereof you have made such liberall profession to me; let me obtaine this my very last request, to wit, that seeing I might not privately enjoy the benefit of Guiscardoes love, and while he lived, let yet (in death) one publike grave containe both our bodies, that death may affoord us, what you so cruelly in life denied us.

Extremity of griefe and sorrow, withheld his tongue from returning any answer, and she perceiving her end approaching, held the heart still closer to her owne bare brest, saying; Here Fortune, receive two true hearts latest oblation; for, in this manner are we comming to thee. So closing her eyes, all sense forsooke her, life leaving her body breathlesse. Thus ended the haplesse love of Guiscardo, and Ghismonda, for whose sad disaster, when the King had mourned sufficiently, and repented fruitlesly; he caused both their bodies to be honourably embalmed, and buried in a most royall Monument; not without generall sorrow of the subjects of Salerne.

THE SECOND NOVELL

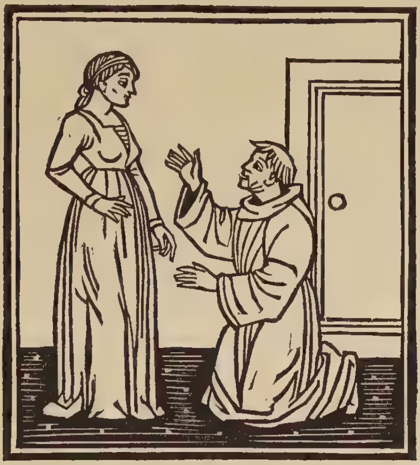
REPREHENDING THE LEWD LIVES OF DISSEMBLING HYPOCRITES; AND CHECKING THE ARROGANT PRIDE OF VAINE-HEADED WOMEN.

FRYAR *Albert made a young Venetian Gentlewoman beleeve, that God Cupid was falne in love with her, and he resorted oftentimes unto her, in the disguise of the same God. Afterward, being frighted by the Gentlewomans kindred and friends, he cast himselfe out of her Chamber window, and was hidden in a poore mans House; on the day following, in the shape of a wilde or savage man, he was brought upon the Rialto of Saint Marke, and being there publikely knowne by the Brethren of his Order, he was committed to Prison.*

THE Novell recounted by Madam Fiammetta, caused teares many times in the eyes of all the company; but it being finished, the King shewing a stearne countenance, saide; I should have much commended the kindnesse of fortune, if in the whole course of my life, I had tasted the least moity of that delight, which Guiscardo received by conversing with faire Ghismonda. Nor neede any of you to wonder thereat, or how it can be otherwise, because hourely I feele a thousand dying torments, without enjoying any hope of ease or pleasure: but referring my fortunes to their owne poore condition, it is my will, that Madam Pampinea proceed next in the argument of successelesse love, according as Madam Fiammetta hath already begun, to let fall more dew-drops on the fire of mine afflictions. Madam Pampinea perceiving what a taske was imposed on her, knew well (by her owne disposition) the inclination of the company, whereof shee was more respective then of the Kings command: wherefore, chusing rather to recreate their spirits, then to satisfie the Kings melancholy humour; she determined to relate a Tale of mirthfull matter, and yet to keepe within compasse of the purposed Argument.

It hath bene continually used as a common Proverbe; that a bad man taken and reputed to be honest and good, may commit many evils, yet neither credited, or suspected: which proverbe giveth me very ample matter to speake of, and yet not varying from our intention, concerning the hypocrisie of some religious persons, who having their garments long and large, their faces made artificially pale, their language meeke and humble to get mens goods from them; yet sowre, harsh and stearne enough, in checking and controuling other mens errours, as also in urging others to give, and themselves to take, without any other hope or meanes of salvation. Nor doe they endeavour like other men, to worke out their soules health with feare and trembling; but, even as if they were sole owners, Lords, and possessors of Paradice, will appoint to every dying person, place (there) of greater or lesser excellency, according as they thinke good, or as the legacies left by them are in quantity, whereby they not onely deceive themselves, but all such as give credit to their subtile perswasions. And were it lawfull for me, to make knowne no more then is meerely necessary; I could quickly disclose to simple credulous people, what craft lieth concealed under their holy habites: and I would wish, that their lies and deluding should speed with them, as they did with a Franciscane Friar, none of the younger Novices, but one of them of greatest reputation, and belonging to one of the best Monasteries in Venice. Which I am the rather desirous to report, to recreate your spirits, after your teares for the death of faire Ghismonda.

Sometime (Honourable Ladies) there lived in the City of Imola, a man of most lewd and wicked life; named, Bertho de la messa, whose shamelesse deedes were so well knowne to all the Citizens, and won such respect among them; as all his lies could not compasse any beleefe, no, not when he delivered a matter of sound truth. Wherefore, perceiving that his lewdnesse allowed him no longer dwelling there; like a desperate adventurer, he transported himselfe thence to Venice, the receptacle of all foule sinne and abhomination, intending there to exercise his wonted bad behaviour, and live as wickedly as ever he had done before. It came to passe, that some remorse of conscience tooke hold of him, for the former passages of his dissolute life, and he pretended to be surprized with very great devotion, becomming much more Catholike then any other man, taking on him the profession of a Franciscane Cordelier, and calling himselfe, Fryar Albert of Imola.



In this habite and outward appearance, hee seemed to leade an austere and sanctimonious life, highly commending penance and abstinence, never eating flesh, or drinking wine, but when he was provided of both in a close corner. And before any person could take notice thereof, hee became (of a theefe) Ruffian, forswearer, and murtherer, as formerly he had beene a great Preacher; yet not abandoning the forenamed vices, when secretly he could put any of them in execution. Moreover, being made Priest, when he was celebrating Masse at the Altar, if he saw himselfe to be observed by any; he would most mournefully reade the passion of our Saviour, as one whose teares cost him little, whensoever hee pleased to use them; so that, in a short while, by his preaching and teares, he fed the humours of the Venetians so pleasingly, that they made him executor (well-neere) of all their Testaments, yea, many chose him as depositary or Guardion of their monies; because he was both Confessour and Councellor, almost to all the men and women.

By this well seeming out-side of sanctity, the Wolfe became a Shepheard, and his renowne for holinesse was so famous in those parts, as Saint Frances himselfe had hardly any more. It fortuned, that a young Gentlewoman, being somewhat foolish, wanton and proud minded, named Madam Lisetta de Caquirino, wife to a wealthy Merchant, who went with certaine Gallies into Flanders, and there lay as Lieger long time: in company of other Gentlewomen, went to be confessed by this ghostly Father; kneeling at his feete, although her heart was high enough, like a proud minded woman, (for Venetians are presumptuous, vaine-glorious, and witted much like to their skittish Gondoloes) she made a very short rehearsall of her sinnes. At length Fryar Albert demanded of her, whether shee had any amorous friend or lover? Her patience being exceedingly provoked, stearne anger appeared in her lookes, which caused her to returne him this answer. How now Sir Domine? what? have you no eyes in your head? Can you not distinguish between mine, and these other common beauties? I could have Lovers enow, if I were so pleased; but those perfections remaining in me, are not to be affected by this man, or that. How many beauties have you beheld, any way answerable to mine, and are more fit for Gods, then mortals.

Many other idle speeches shee uttered, in proud opinion of her beauty, whereby Friar Albert presently perceived, that this Gentlewoman had but a hollow braine, and was fit game for folly to flye at; which made him instantly enamoured of her, and that beyond all capacity of resisting, which yet he referred to a further, and more commodious time. Neverthelesse, to shew himselfe an holy and religious man now, he began to reprehend her, and told her plainely, that she was vain-glorious, and overcome with infinite follies. Heereupon, she called him a logger headed beast, and he knew not the difference betweene an ordinary complexion, and beauty of the highest merit. In which respect, Friar Albert, being loth to offend her any further; after confession was fully ended, let her passe away among the other Gentlewomen, she giving him divers disdainfull lookes.

Within some few dayes after, taking one of his trusty brethren in his company, he went to the House of Madam Lisetta, where requiring to have some conference alone with her selfe; shee tooke him into a private Parlor, and being there, not to be seene by any body, he fell on his knees before her, speaking in this manner. Madam, for charities sake, and in regard of your owne most gracious nature, I beseech you to pardon those harsh speeches, which I used to you the other day, when you were with me at confession: because, the very night ensuing thereon, I was chastised in such cruell manner, as I was never able to stirre forth of my bed, untill this very instant morning; whereto the weake-witted Gentlewoman thus replyed. And who I pray you (quoth she) did chastise you so severely? I will tell you Madam, said Friar Albert, but it is a matter of admirable secrecie.

Being alone by my selfe the same night in my Dorter, and in very serious devotion, according to my usuall manner: suddenly I saw a bright splendour about me, and I could no sooner arise to discerne what it might be, and whence it came, but I espied a very goodly young Lad standing by me, holding a golden Bow in his hand, and a rich Quiver of Arrowes hanging at his backe. Catching fast hold on my Hood, against the ground he threw me rudely, trampling on me with his feete, and beating me with so many cruell blowes, that I thought my body to be broken in peeces. Then I desired to know, why he was so rigorous to me in his correction? Because (quoth he) thou didst so saucily presume this day, to reprove the celestiall beauty of Madam Lisetta, who (next to my Mother Venus) I love most dearely. Whereupon I perceived, he was the great commanding God Cupid, and therefore I craved most humbly pardon of him. I will pardon thee (quoth he) but upon this condition, that thou goe to her so soone as conveniently thou canst, and (by lowly humility) prevaile to obtaine her free pardon: which if she will not vouchsafe to grant thee, then shall I in stearne anger returne againe, and lay so many torturing afflictions on thee, that all thy whole life time shall be most hatefull to thee. And what the displeased God saide else beside, I dare not disclose, except you please first to pardon me.

Mistresse shallow-braine, being swolne big with this wind, like an empty bladder; conceived no small pride in hearing these words, constantly crediting them to be true, and therefore thus answered. Did I not tel you Father Albert, that my beauty was celestiall? But I sweare by my beauty, notwithstanding your idle passed arrogancy, I am heartily sorry for your so severe correction; which that it may no more be inflicted on you, I do freely pardon you; yet with this proviso, that you tell me what the God else saide unto you; whereto Fryar Albert thus replyed. Madam, seeing you have so graciously vouchsafed to pardon me, I will thankfully tell you all: but you must be very carefull and respective, that whatsoever I shall reveale unto you, must so closely be concealed, as no living creature in the World may know it; for you are the onely happy Lady now living, and that happinesse relieth on your silence and secrecie: with solemne vowes and protestations she sealed up her many promises, and then the Fryar thus proceeded.

Madam, the further charge imposed on me by God Cupid, was to tell you, that himselfe is so extremely enamored of your beauty, and you are become so gracious in his affection; as, many nights he hath come to see you in your Chamber, sitting on your pillow, while you slept sweetly, and desiring very often to awake you, but onely fearing to affright you. Wherefore, now he sends you word by me, that one night he intendeth to come visite you, and to spend some time in conversing with you. But in regard he is a God, and meerely a spirit in forme, whereby neither you or any else have capacity of beholding him, much lesse to touch or feele him: he saith that (for your sake) he will come in the shape of a man, giving me charge also to know of you, when you shall please to have him come, and in whose similitude you would have him to come, whereof he will not faile; in which respect, you may justly thinke your selfe to be the onely happy woman living, and farre beyond all other in your good fortune.

Mistresse want-wit presently answered, shee was well contented, that God Cupid should love her, and she would returne the like love againe to him; protesting withall, that wheresoever shee should see his majesticall picture, she would set a hallowed burning Taper before it. Moreover, at all times he should be most welcome to her, whensoever hee would vouchsafe to visite her; for, he should alwayes finde her alone in her private Chamber: on this condition, that his olde Love Psyches, and all other beauties else whatsoever, must be set aside, and none but her selfe onely to be his best Mistresse, referring his personall forme of appearance, to what shape himselfe best pleased to assume, so that it might not be frightfull, or offensive to her.

Madam (quoth Friar Albert) most wisely have you answered, and leave the matter to me; for I will take order sufficiently, and to your contentment. But you may do me a great grace, and without any prejudice to your selfe, in granting me one poore request; namely, to vouchsafe the Gods appearance to you, in my bodily shape and person, and in the perfect forme of a man as now you behold me: so may you safely give him entertainment, without any taxation of the world, or ill apprehension of the most curious inquisition. Beside, a greater happinesse can never befall me: for, while he assumeth the soule out of my body, and walketh on the earth in my humane figure: I shall be wandering in the joyes of Lovers Paradise, feeling the fruition of their felicities; which are such, as no mortality can be capeable of, no, not so much as in imagination.

The wise Gentlewoman replied, that she was well contented, in regard of the severe punishment inflicted on him by God Cupid, for the reproachfull speeches he had given her; to allow him so poore a kinde of consolation, as he had requested her to grant him. Whereuppon Friar Albert saide: Be ready then Madam to give him welcome to morrow in the evening, at the entering into your house, for comming in an humane body, he cannot but enter at your doores: whereas, if (in powerfull manner) he made use of his wings, he then would flye in at your window, and then you could not be able to see him.

Upon this conclusion, Albert departed, leaving Lisetta in no meane pride of imagination, that God Cupid should be enamoured of her beauty; and therefore she thought each houre a yeare, till she might see him in the mortall shape of Friar Albert. And now was his braine wonderfully busied, to visite her in more then common or humane manner; and therefore he made him a sute (close to his body) of white Taffata, all poudred over with Starres, and spangles of Gold, a Bow and Quiver of Arrowes, with wings also fastened to his backe behinde him, and all cunningly covered with his Friars habit, which must be the sole meanes of his safe passage.

Having obtained licence of his Superiour, and being accompanied with an holy Brother of the Convent, yet ignorant of the businesse by him intended; he went to the house of a friend of his, which was his usuall receptacle, whensoever he went about such deeds of darknes. There did he put on his dissembled habit of God Cupid, with his winges, Bowe, and Quiver, in formall fashion; and then (clouded over with his Monkes Cowle) leaves his companion to awaite his returning backe, while he visited foolish Lisetta, according to her expectation, readily attending for the Gods arrivall.

Albert being come to the house, knocked at the doore, and the Maide admitting him entrance, according as her Mistresse had appointed, she conducted him to her Mistresses Chamber, where laying aside his Friars habite, and she seeing him shine with such glorious splendour, adding action also to his assumed dissimulation, with majesticke motion of his body, wings, and bow, as if he had bene God Cupid indeede, converted into a body much bigger of stature, then Painters commonly do describe him, her wisedome was overcome with feare and admiration, that she fell on her knees before him, expressing all humble reverence unto him. And he spreading his wings over her, as with wiers and strings he had made them pliant; shewed how graciously he accepted her humiliation; folding her in his armes, and sweetly kissing her many times together, with repetition of his entire love and affection towards her. So delicately was he perfumed with odoriferous savours, and so compleate of person in his spangled garments, that she could do nothing else, but wonder at his rare behaviour, reputing her felicity beyond all Womens in the world, and utterly impossible to be equalled, such was the pride of her presuming. For he told her divers tales and fables, of his awefull power among the other Gods, and stolne pleasures of his upon the earth; yet gracing her praises above all his other Loves, and vowes made now, to affect none but her onely, as his often visitations should more constantly assure her, that she verily credited all his protestations, and thought his kisses and embraces, farre to exceed any mortall comparison.

After they had spent so much time in amorous discoursing, as might best fit with this their first meeting, and stand cleare from suspition on either side: our Albert Cupid, or Cupid Albert, which of them you best please to terme him, closing his spangled winges together againe behinde his backe, fastening also on his Bow and Quiver of Arrowes, overclouds all with his religious Monkes Cowle, and then with a parting kisse or two, returned to the place where he had left his fellow and companion, perhaps imployed in as devout an exercise, as he had bin in his absence from him; whence both repayring home to the Monastery, all this nightes wandering was allowed as tollerable, by them who made no spare of doing the like.

On the morrow following, Madam Lisetta immediately after dinner, being attended by her Chamber-maid, went to see Friar Albert, finding him in his wonted forme and fashion, and telling him what had hapned betweene her and God Cupid, with all the other lies and tales which hee had told her. Truly Madam (answered Albert) what your successe with him hath beene, I am no way able to comprehend; but this I can assure you, that so soone as I had acquainted him with your answer, I felt a sodaine rapture made of my soule, and visibly (to my apprehension) saw it carried by Elves and Fairies, into the floury fields about Elisium, where Lovers departed out of this life, walke among the beds of Lillies and Roses, such as are not in this world to be seene, neither to be imagined by any humane capacity. So super-abounding was the pleasure of this joy and solace, that, how long I continued there, or by what meanes I was transported hither againe this morning, it is beyond all ability in mee to expresse, or how I assumed my body againe after that great God had made use thereof to your service. Well Fryar Albert (quoth shee) you may see what an happinesse hath befalne you, by so grosse an opinion of my perfections, and what a felicity you enjoy, and still are like to do, by my pardoning your error, and granting the God accesse to me in your shape: which as I envy not, so I wish you heereafter to be wiser, in taking upon you to judge of beauty. Much other idle folly proceeded from her, which still he soothed to her contentment, and (as occasion served) many meetings they had in the former manner.

It fortuned within few dayes after that Madam Lisetta being in company with one of her Gossips, and their conference (as commonly it falleth out to be) concerning other women of the City; their beauty, behaviour, amorous suters and servants, and generall opinion conceived of their worth and merit; wherein Lisetta was over-much conceyted of her selfe, not admitting any other to be her equall. Among other speeches, savouring of an unseasoned braine: Gossip (quoth she) if you knew what account is made of my beauty, and who holdes it in no meane estimation, you would then freely confesse, that I deserve to be preferred before any other. As women are ambitious in their owne opinions, so commonly are they covetous of one anothers secrets, especially in matter of emulation, whereupon the Gossip thus replyed. Beleeve me Madam, I make no doubt but your speeches may be true, in regard of your admired beauty, and many other perfections beside; yet let me tell you, priviledges, how great and singular soever they be, without they are knowen to others, beside such as do particularly enjoy them; they carry no more account, then things of ordinary estimation. Whereas on the contrary, when any Lady or Gentlewoman hath some eminent and peculiar favour, which few or none other can reach unto, and it is made famous by generall notion; then do all women else admire and honor her, as the glory of their kinde, and a miracle of Nature.

I perceive Gossip said Lisetta, whereat you aime, and such is my love to you, as you should not lose your longing in this case, were I but constantly secured of your secrecy, which as hitherto I have bene no way able to taxe, so would I be loth now to be more suspitious of then needs. But yet this matter is of such maine moment, that if you will protest as you are truly vertuous, never to reveale it to any living body, I will disclose to you almost a miracle. The vertuous oath being past, with many other solemne protestations beside, Lisetta then proceeded in this maner.

I know Gossip, that it is a matter of common and ordinary custome, for Ladies and Gentlewomen to be graced with favourites, men of fraile and mortall conditions, whose natures are as subject to inconstancy, as their very best endevours dedicated to folly, as I could name no mean number of our Ladies heere in Venice. But when Soveraigne deities shall feele the impression of our humane desires, and behold subjects of such prevailing efficacy, as to subdue their greatest power, yea, and make them enamored of mortall creatures: you may well imagine Gossip, such a beauty is superiour to any other. And such is the happy fortune of your friend Lisetta, of whose perfections, great Cupid the awefull commanding God of Love himselfe, conceived such an extraordinary liking: as he hath abandoned his seate of supreme Majesty, and appeared to me in the shape of a mortall man, with lively expression of his amourous passions, and what extremities of anguish he hath endured, onely for my love. May this be possible? replyed the Gossip. Can the Gods be toucht with the apprehension of our fraile passions? True it is Gossip, answered Lisetta, and so certainly true, that his sacred kisses, sweete embraces, and most pleasing speeches with proffer of his continuall devotion towards me, hath given me good cause to confirme what I say, and to thinke my felicity farre beyond all other womens, being honoured with his often nightly visitations.

The Gossip inwardly smiling at her idle speeches, which (nevertheles) she avouched with very vehement asseverations: fell instantly sicke of womens naturall disease, thinking every minute a tedious month, till she were in company with some other Gossips, to breake the obligation of her vertuous promise, and that others (as well as her selfe) might laugh at the folly of this shallow-witted woman. The next day following, it was her hap to be at a wedding, among a great number of other women, whom quickly she acquainted with this so strange a wonder; as they did the like to their husbands: and passing so from hand to hand, in lesse space then two dayes, all Venice was fully possessed with it.

Among the rest, the brethren to this foolish woman, heard this admirable newes concerning their Sister; and they discreetly concealing it to themselves, closely concluded to watch the walks of this pretended God: and if he soared not too lofty a flight, they would clip his wings, to come the better acquainted with him. It fortuned, that the Friar hearing his Cupidicall visitations over-publikely discovered, purposed to check and reprove Lisetta for her indiscretion. And being habited according to his former manner, his Friarly Cowle covering all his former bravery, he left his companion where he used to stay, and closely walked along unto the house. No sooner was he entred, but the Brethren being ambushed neere to the doore, went in after him, and ascending the staires, by such time as he had uncased himselfe, and appeared like God Cupid, with his spangled wings displayed: they rushed into the Chamber, and he having no other refuge, opened a large Casement, standing directly over the great gulfe or River, and presently leapt into the water; which being deepe, and he skilfull in swimming, he had no other harme by his fall, albeit the sodaine affright did much perplex him.

Recovering the further side of the River, he espied a light, and the doore of an house open, wherein dwelt a poore man, whom he earnestly intreated, to save both his life and reputation, telling him many lies and tales by what meanes he was thus disguised, and throwne by night-walking Villaines into the water. The poore man, being moved to compassionate his distressed estate, laid him in his owne bed, ministring such other comforts to him, as the time and his poverty did permit; and day drawing on, he went about his businesse, advising him to take his rest, and it should not be long till he returned. So, locking the doore, and leaving the counterfet God in bed, away goes the poore man to his daily labor. The Brethren to Lisetta, perceiving God Cupid to be fled and gone, and she in melancholly sadnesse sitting by them: they tooke up the Reliques he had left behind him, I meane the Friars hood and Cowle, which shewing to their sister, and sharpely reproving her unwomanly behaviour: they left her in no meane discomfort, returning home to their owne houses, with their conquered spoile of the forlorne Friar.

During the times of these occurrences, broad day speeding on, and the poore man returning homeward by the Rialto, to visit his guest so left in bed: he beheld divers crouds of people, and a generall rumor noysed among them, that God Cupid had bene that night with Madam Lisetta, where being over-closely pursued by her Brethren, for feare of being surprized, he leapt out of her window into the gulfe, and no one could tell what was become of him. Heereupon, the poore man began to imagine, that the guest entertained by him in the night time, must needs be the same supposed God Cupid, as by his wings and other embellishments appeared: wherefore being come home, and sitting downe on the beds side by him, after some few speeches passing betweene them, he knew him to be Friar Albert, who promised to give him fifty ducates, if he would not betray him to Lisettaes Brethren.

Upon the acceptation of this offer, the money being sent for, and paied downe; there wanted nothing now, but some apt and convenient meanes, whereby Albert might safely be conveyed into the Monastery, which being wholly referred to the poore mans care and trust, thus he spake. Sir, I see no likely-hood of your cleare-escaping home, except in this manner as I advise you. We observe this day as a merry Festivall, and it is lawfull for any one, to disguise a man in the skin of a Beare, or in the shape of a savage man, or any other forme of better advice. Which being so done, he is brought upon S. Markes market place, where being hunted a while with dogs, upon the huntings conclusion, the Feast is ended; and then each man leades his monster whether him pleaseth. If you can accept any of these shapes, before you be seene heere in my poore abiding, then can I safely (afterward) bring you where you would be. Otherwise, I see no possible meanes, how you may escape hence unknown; for it is without all question to the contrary, that the Gentlewomans brethren, knowing your concealment in some one place or other, wil set such spies and watches for you throughout the City, as you must needs be taken by them.

Now, although it seemed a most severe imposition, for Albert to passe in any of these disguises: yet his exceeding feare of Lisettaes brethren and friends, made him gladly yeelde, and to undergo what shape the poore man pleased, which thus he ordered. Annointing his naked body with Hony, he then covered it over with downy small Feathers, and fastening a chaine about his necke, and a strange ugly vizard on his face, he gave him a great staffe in the one hand, and two huge Mastive dogs chained together in the other, which he had borrowed in the Butchery. Afterward, he sent a man to the Rialto, who there proclaimed by the sound of Trumpet: That all such as desired to see God Cupid, which the last nights had descended downe from the skies, and fell (by ill hap) into the Venetian gulfe, let them repaire to the publike Market place of S. Marke, and there he would appeare in his owne likenesse.

This being done, soone after he left his house, and leading him thus disguised along by the chaine, he was followed by great crowds of people, every one questioning of whence, and what he was. In which manner, he brought him, to the Market place, where an infinite number of people were gathered together, as well of the followers, as of them that before heard the proclamation. There he made choice of a pillar, which stood in a place somewhat highly exalted, wherto he chained his savage man, making shew, as if he meant to awaite there, till the hunting should begin: in which time, the Flies, Waspes, and Hornets, did so terribly sting his naked body, being annointed with Hony, that he endured therby unspeakable anguish. When the poore man saw, that there needed no more concourse of people; pretending, as if he purposed to let loose his Salvage man; he tooke the maske or vizard from Alberts face, and then he spake aloud in this manner.

Gentlemen and others, seeing the wilde Boare commeth not to our hunting, because I imagine that he cannot easily be found: I meane (to the end you may not lose your labour in comming hither) to shew you the great God of Love called Cupid, who Poets feigned long since to be a little boy, but now growne to manly stature. You see in what maner he hath left his high dwelling, onely for the comfort of our Venetian beauties: but belike, the night-fogs over-flagging his wings, he fell into our gulfe, and comes now to present his service to you. No sooner had he taken off his vizard, but every one knew him to be Fryar Albert; and sodainely arose such shoutes and outcries, with most bitter words breathed forth against him, hurling also stones, durt and filth in his face, that his best acquaintance then could take no knowledge of him, and not any one pittying his abusing.

So long continued the offended people in their fury, that the newes therof was carried to the Convent, and six of his Religious Brethren came, who casting an habite about him, and releasing him from his chaine, they led him to the Monastery, not without much mollestation and trouble of the people; where imprisoning him in their house, severity of some inflicted punishment, or rather conceite for his open shame, shortned his dayes, and so he dyed. Thus you see (fayre Ladies) when licentious life must be clouded with a cloake of sanctitie, and evill actions daylie committed, yet escaping uncredited: there will come a time at length, for just discovering of all, that the good may shine in their true luster of glory, and the bad sinke in their owne deserved shame.

THE THIRD NOVELL

HEEREIN IS DECLARED, HOW DANGEROUS THE OCCASION IS, ENSUING BY ANGER AND DESPIGHT, IN SUCH AS ENTIRELY LOVE, ESPECIALLY BEING INJURIED AND OFFENDED BY THEM THAT THEY LOVE.

THREE *yong Gentlemen affecting three Sisters, fledde with them into Candie. The eldest of them (through jealousie) becommeth the death of her Lover; The second, by consenting to the Duke of Candies request, is the meanes of saving her life. Afterward, her owne Friend killeth her, and thence flyeth away with the elder Sister. The third couple, are charged with her death, and being committed prisoners, they confesse the fact; and fearing death, by corruption of money they prevaile with their Keepers, escaping from thence to Rhodes, where they dyed in great poverty.*

WHEN the King perceyved that Madame Pampinea had ended her discourse, he sat sadly a pretty while, without uttering one word, but afterward spake thus. Little goodnesse appeared in the beginning of this Novell, because it ministred occasion of mirth; yet the ending proved better, and I could wish, that worse inflictions had falne on the venerious Friar. Then turning towards Madam Lauretta, he said; Lady, do you tell us a better tale, if possible it may be. She smiling, thus answered the King: Sir, you are over-cruelly bent against poore Lovers, in desiring, that their amourous processions should have harsh and sinister concludings. Neverthelesse, in obedience to your severe command, among three persons amourously perplexed, I will relate an unhappy ending; whereas all may be saide to speede as unfortunately, being equally alike, in enjoying the issue of their desires, and thus I purpose to proceede.

Every Vice (choice Ladies) as very well you know, redoundeth to the great disgrace and prejudice of him, or her, by whom it is practised, and oftentimes to others. Now, among those common hurtfull enemies, the sinne or vice which most carrieth us with full carrere, and draweth us into unadvoydable dangers (in mine opinion) seemeth to be that of choller or anger, which is a sodain and inconsiderate moving, provoked by some received injury, which having excluded all respect of reason, and dimnd (with darke vapors) the bright discerning sight of the understanding, enflameth the minde with most violent fury. And albeit this inconvenience hapneth most to men, and more to some few then others, yet notwithstanding, it hath bene noted, that women have felt the selfesame infirmity, and in more extreme manner, because it much sooner is kindled in them, and burneth with the brighter flame, in regard they have the lesser consideration, and therefore not to be wondred at. For if we wil advisedly observe, we shall plainely perceive, that fire (even of his owne nature) taketh hold on such things as are light and tender, much sooner then it can on hard and weighty substances; and some of us women (let men take no offence at my words) are farre more soft and delicate then they be, and therefore more fraile. In which regard, seeing wee are naturally enclined hereto, and considering also, how much our affability and gentlenesse do shew themselves pleasing and full of content to those men with whom we are to live; and likewise, how anger and fury are compacted of extraordinary perils: I purpose (because we may be the more valiant in our courage, to outstand the fierce assaults of wrath and rage) to shew you by mine ensuing Novell, how the loves of three yong Gentlemen, and of as many Gentlewomen, came to fatall and fortunat successe by the tempestuous anger of one among them, as I have formerly related unto you.

Marseilles (as you are not now to learne) is in Provence; seated on the Sea, and is also a very ancient and most Noble Citty, which hath bene (heeretofore) inhabited with farre richer and more wealthy Merchants, then at this instant time it is. Among whom, there was one named Narnaldo Civida, a man but of meane condition, yet cleare in faith and reputation, and in lands, goods, and ready monies, immeasurably rich. Many children he had by his Wife, among whom were three Daughters, which exceeded his Sonnes in yeeres. Two of them being twinnes, and borne of one body, were counted to be fifteene yeeres old; the third was foureteene, and nothing hindered marriage in their Parents owne expectation but the returne home of Narnaldo, who was then abroad in Spaine with his Merchandizes. The eldest of these Sisters was named Ninetta, the second Magdalena, and the third Bertella. A Gentleman (albeit but poore in fortunes) and called Restagnone, was so extraordinarily enamoured of Ninetta, as no man possibly could be more, and she likewise as earnest in affection towards him; yet both carrying their loves proceeding with such secrecy, as long time they enjoyed their hearts sweet contentment, yet undiscovered.

It came to passe, that two other young Gallants, the one named Folco, and the other Hugnetto, (who had attained to incredible wealth, by the decease of their Father) were also as far in love, the one with Magdalena, and the other with Bertella. When Restagnone had intelligence thereof, by the meanes of his faire friend Ninetta, he purposed to releeve his poverty, by friendly furthering both their love, and his owne: and growing into familiarity with them, one while he would walke abroad with Folco, and then againe with Hugnetto, but oftner with them both together, to visite their Mistresses, and continue worthy friendship. On a day, when hee saw the time suteable to his intent, and that hee had invited the two Gentlemen home unto his House, he fell into this like Conference with them.

Kinde Friends (quoth he) the honest familiarity which hath past betweene us, may render you some certaine assurance, of the constant love I beare to you both, being as willing to worke any meanes that may tend to your good, as I desire to compasse mine owne. And because the truth of mine affection cannot conceale it selfe to you, I meane to acquaint you with an intention, wherewith my braine hath a long while travelled and now may soone be delivered of, if it may passe with your liking and approbation. Let me then tell you, that except your speeches savour of untruth, and your actions carry a double understanding, in common behaviour both by night and day, you appeare to pine and consume away, in the cordiall love you beare to two of the Sisters, as I suffer the same afflictions for the third, with reciprocall requitall of their deerest affection to us. Now, to qualifie the heate of our tormenting flames, if you will condescend to such a course as I shall advise you, the remedy will yeild them equall ease to ours, and we may safely injoy the benefit of contentment. As wealth aboundeth with you both, so doth want most extremely tyrannize over me: but if one banke might be made of both your rich substances, I embraced therein as a third partaker, and some quarter of the world dissigned out by us, where to live at hearts ease upon your possessions, I durst engage my credit, that all the sisters (not meanely stored with their Fathers treasure) shall beare us company to what place soever we please. There each man freely enjoying his owne deerest love, may live like three brethren, without any hinderance to our mutuall content: it remaineth now in you Gentlemen, to accept this comfortable offer, or to refuse it.

The two Brothers, whose passions exceeded their best means for support, perceiving some hope how to enjoy their loves; desired no long time of deliberation, or greatly disputed with their thoughts what was best to be done: but readily replyed, that let happen any danger whatsoever, they would joyne with him in this determination, and he should partake with them in their wealthiest fortunes. After Restagnone had heard their answer, within some few dayes following, he went to confer with Ninetta, which was no easie matter for him to compasse. Neverthelesse, opportunity proved so favourable to him, that meeting with her at a private place appointed, he discoursed at large, what had passed betweene him and the other two young Gentlemen, maintaining the same with many good reasons, to have her like and allow of the enterprize. Which although (for a while) he could very hardly doe; yet, in regard shee had more desire then power, without suspition to be daily in his company, she thus answered. My hearts chosen friend, I cannot any way mislike your advice, and will take such order with my Sisters, that they shal agree to our resolution. Let it therefore be your charge, that you and the rest make every thing ready, to depart from hence so soone, as with best convenient meanes we may be enabled.

Restagnone being returned to Folco and Hugnetto, who thought everie houre a yeare, to heare what would succeede upon the promise past between them; he told them in plain termes, that their Ladies were as free in consent as they, and nothing wanted now, but furnishment for their sodaine departing. Having concluded, that Candye should bee their harbour for entertainment, they made sale of some few inheritances which lay the readiest for the purpose, as also the goods in their Houses; and then, under colour of venting Merchandizes abroad, they bought a nimble Pinnace, fortified with good strength and preparation, and wayted but for a convenient winde. On the other side, Ninetta who was sufficiently acquainted with the forwardnesse of her Sisters desires, and her owne, had so substantially prevailed with them, that a good Voyage now was the sole expectation. Whereupon, the same night when they should set away, they opened a strong barred Chest of their Fathers, whence they tooke great store of Gold and costly Jewels, wherewith escaping secretly out of the house; they came to the place where their Lovers attended for them, and going all aboord the Pinnace, the windes were so furtherous to them, that without touching any where, the night following, they arrived at Geneway.

There being out of perill or pursuit, they all knit the knot of holy wedlocke, and then freely enjoyed their long wished desires, from whence setting saile againe, and being well furnished with all things wanting; passing on from Port to Port, at the end of eight dayes, they landed in Candie, not meeting with any impeachment on the way. Determining there to spend their daies, first they provided themselves of goodly lands in the Countrey, and then of beautifull dwelling houses in the City, with al due furnishments belonging to them, and Families well beseeming such worthy Gentlemen, and all delights else for their daily recreations, inviting their Neighbours, and they them againe in loving manner; so that no lovers could wish to live in more ample contentment.

Passing on their time in this height of felicity, and not crossed by any sinister accidents, it came to passe (as often wee may observe in the like occasions, that although delights doe most especially please us, yet they breede surfet, when they swell too over-great in abundance) that Restagnone, who most deerely affected his faire Ninetta, and had her now in his free possession, without any perill of loosing her: grew now also to bee weary of her, and consequently, to faile in those familiar performances, which formerly had passed betweene them. For, being one day invited to a Banket, hee saw there a beautifull Gentlewoman of that Countrey, whose perfections pleasing him beyond all comparison: he laboured (by painfull pursuite) to win his purpose; and meeting with her in divers private places, grew prodigall in his expences upon her. This could not be so closely carried, but being seene and observed by Ninetta, she became possessed with such extreame jealousie, that hee could not doe any thing whatsoever, but immediately she had knowledge of it: which fire, growing to a flame in her, her patience became extreamely provoked, urging rough and rude speeches from her to him, and daily tormenting him beyond power of sufferance.

As the enjoying of any thing in too much plenty, makes it appeare irkesome and loathing to us, and the deniall of our desires, do more and more whet on the appetite: even so did the angry spleen of Ninetta proceede on in violence, against this new commenced love of Restagnone. For, in succession of time, whether he enjoyed the embracements of his new Mistresse, or no: yet Ninetta (by sinister reports, but much more through her owne jealous imaginations) held it for infallible, and to bee most certaine. Heereupon, she fell into an extreame melancholly, which melancholly begat implacable fury, and (consequently) such contemptible disdaine, as converted her formerly kindely love to Restagnone, into most cruell and bloudie hatred; yea, and so strangely was reason or respect confounded in her, as no revenge else but speedie death, might satisfie the wrongs shee imagined to receive by Restagnone and his Minion.

Upon enquiry, by what meanes shee might best compasse her bloody intention, she grew acquainted with a Grecian woman, and wonderfully expert in the compounding of poysons, whom shee so perswaded by gifts and bounteous promises, that at the length shee prevayled with her. A deadly water was distilled by her, which (without any other counsell to the contrary) on a day when Restagnone had his blood somewhat over-heated, and little dreamed on any such Treason conspired against him by his Wife, shee caused him to drinke a great draught thereof, under pretence, that it was a most soveraigne and cordiall water; but such was the powerfull operation thereof, that the very next morning, Restagnone was found to bee dead in his bed. When his death was understoode by Folco, Hugnetto, and their Wives, and not knowing how hee came to bee thus empoysoned (because their Sister seemed to bemoane his sodaine death, with as apparant shewes of mourning, as they could possibly expresse) they buried him very honourably, and so all suspition ceased.

But as Fortune is infinite in her fagaries, never acting disaster so closely, but as cunningly discovereth it againe: so it came to passe, that within a few dayes following, the Grecian Woman that had delivered the poyson to Ninetta, for such another deede of damnation, was apprehended even in the action. And being put upon the tortures, among many other horrid villanies by her committed, she confessed the empoysoning of Restagnone, and every particle thereto appertaining. Whereupon, the Duke of Candie, without any noyse or publication, setting a strong guard (in the night time) about the house of Folco, where Ninetta then was lodged; there sodainly they seized on her, and upon examination, in maintenance of her desperate revenge, voluntarily confessed the fact, and what else concerned the occasion of his death, by the wrongs which he had offered her.

Folco and Hugnetto understanding secretly, both from the Duke, and other intimate friends, what was the reason of Ninettaes apprehension, which was not a little displeasing to them, labored by all their best paines and endeavour, to worke such meanes with the Duke, that her life might not perish by fire, although she had most justly deserved it; but all theyr attempts proved to no effect, because the Duke had concluded to execute justice.

Heere you are to observe, that Magdalena (beeing a very beautifull Woman, yong, and in the choisest flower of her time:) had often before bene solicited by the Duke, to entertaine his love and kindnesse: whereto by no meanes she would listen or give consent. And being now most earnestly importuned by her for the safetie of her Sisters life, hee tooke hold on this her dayly suite to him, and in private told her, that if she was so desirous of Ninettaes life: it lay in her power to obtain it, by granting him the fruition of her love. She apparantly perceiving that Ninetta was not likely to live, but by the prostitution of her chaste honour, which she preferred before the losse of her owne life, or her sisters, concluded, to let her dye, rather then run into any such disgrace. But having an excellent ingenious wit, quicke, and apprehensive in perillous occasions, she intended now to make a triall of overreaching the lascivious Duke in his wanton purpose, and yet to be assured of her sisters life, without any blemish to her reputation.

Soliciting him still as shee was wont to doe, this promise passed from her to him, that when Ninetta was delivered out of prison, and in safetie at home in her house: hee should resort thither in some queint disguise, and enjoy his long expected desire; but untill then she would not yeeld. So violent was the Duke in the prosecution of his purpose, that under colour of altering the manner of Ninettaes death, not suffering her to bee consumed by fire, but to be drowned, according to a custome observed there long time, and at the importunity of her Sister Magdalena, in the still silence of the night, Ninetta was conveyed into a sacke, and sent in that manner to the House of Folco, the Duke following soone after, to challenge her promise.

Magdalena, having acquainted her Husband with her vertuous intention, for preserving her Sisters life, and disappointing the Duke in his wicked desire; was as contrary to her true meaning in this case, as Ninetta had formerly beene adverse to Restagnone, onely being over-ruled likewise by jealousie, and perswaded in his rash opinion, that the Duke had already dishonoured Magdalena, otherwise, he would not have delivered Ninetta out of prison. Mad fury gave further fire to this unmanly perswasion, and nothing will now quench this violent flame, but the life of poore Magdalena, suddenly sacrificed in the rescue of her Sister, such a divell is anger, when the understandings bright eye is thereby abused. No credit might bee given to her womanly protestations, or any thing seeme to alter his bloody purpose; but, having slaine Magdalena with his Poniard (notwithstanding her teares and humble entreaties) he ranne in haste to Ninettaes Chamber, she not dreaming on any such desperate accident, and to her he used these dissembling speeches.

Sister (quoth he) my wife hath advised, that I should speedily convey you hence, as fearing the renewing of the Dukes fury, and your falling againe into the hands of Justice: I have a Barke readily prepared for you, and your life being secured, it is all that she and I doe most desire. Ninetta being fearefull, and no way distrusting what he had saide; in thankfull allowance of her Sisters care, and curteous tender of his so ready service; departed thence presently with him, not taking any farewell of her other Sister and her Husband. To the Seashore they came, very weakely provided of monies to defray their charges, and getting aboard the Barke, directed their course themselves knew not whether.

The amorous Duke in his disguise, having long daunced attendance at Folcoes doore, and no admittance of his entrance; angerly returned backe to his Court, protesting severe revenge on Magdalena, if she gave him not the better satisfaction, to cleare her from thus basely abusing him. On the morrow morning, when Magdalena was found murthered in her Chamber, and tidings thereof carried to the Duke; present search was made for the bloody offendor, but Folco being fled and gone with Ninetta; some there were, who bearing deadly hatred to Hugnetto, incensed the Duke against him and his wife, as supposing them to be guilty of Magdalenaes death. He being thereto very easily perswaded, in regard of his immoderate love to the slaine Gentlewoman; went himselfe in person (attended on by his Guard) to Hugnettoes House, where both he and his wife were seized as prisoners.

These newes were very strange to them, and their imprisonment as unwelcome; and although they were truly inocent, either in knowledge of the horrid fact, or the departure of Folco with Ninetta: yet being unable to endure the tortures extremity, they made themselves culpable by confession, and that they had a hand with Folco in the murder of Magdalena. Upon this their forced confession, and sentence of death pronounced on them by the Duke himselfe; before the day appointed for their publike execution, by great summes of money, which they had closely hid in their House, to serve when any urgent extremitie should happen to them; they corrupted their keepers, and before any intelligence could be had of their flight, they escaped by Sea to Rhodes, where they lived afterward in great distresse and misery. The just vengeance of Heaven followed after Folco and Ninetta, he for murthering his honest wife, and she for poysoning her offending Husband: for being beaten a long while on the Seas, by tempestuous stormes and weather, and not admitted landing in any Port or creeke; they were driven backe on the Coast of

Candie againe, where being apprehended, and brought to the City before the Duke, they confessed their severall notorious offences, and ended their loathed lives in one fire together.

Thus the idle and loose love of Restagnone, with the franticke rage and jealousie of Ninetta and Folco, overturned all their long continued happinesse, and threw a disastrous ending on them all.

THE FOURTH NOVELL

IN COMMENDATION OF JUSTICE BETWEENE PRINCES; AND DECLARING WITHALL, THAT NEITHER FEARE, DANGERS, NOR DEATH IT SELFE, CAN ANY WAY DAUNT A TRUE AND LOYALL LOVER.

GERBINO, *contrary to the former plighted faith of his Grand-father, King Gulielmo, fought with a Ship at Sea, belonging to the King of Thunis, to take away his Daughter, who was then in the same Ship. Shee being slaine by them that had the possession of her, he likewise slew them; and afterward had his owne head smitten off.*

MADAM Lauretta having concluded her Novel, and the company complaining on Lovers misfortunes, some blaming the angry and jealous fury of Ninetta, and every one delivering their severall opinions; the King, as awaking out of a passionate perplexity, exalted his lookes, giving a signe to Madame Elisa, that shee should follow next in order, whereto she obeying, began in this manner. I have heard (Gracious Ladies, quoth she) of many people, who are verily perswaded, that Loves arrowes, never wound any body, but onely by the eyes lookes and gazes, mocking and scorning such as maintaine that men may fall in love by hearing onely. Wherein (beleeve me) they are greatly deceived, as will appeare by a Novell which I must now relate unto you, and wherein you shall plainely perceive, that not onely fame or report is as prevailing as sight; but also hath conducted divers, to a wretched and miserable ending of their lives.

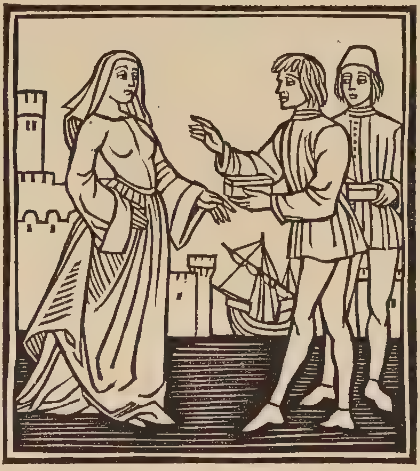
Gulielmo the second, King of Sicilie, according as the Sicilian Chronicles record, had two children, the one a sonne, named Don Rogero, and the other a daughter, called Madame Constance. The saide Rogero died before his Father, leaving a sonne behind him, named Gerbino, who, with much care and cost, was brought up by his Grand-father, proving to be a very goodly Prince, and wonderously esteemed for his great valour and humanity. His fame could not containe it selfe, within the bounds or limits of Sicilie onely, but being published very prodigally, in many parts of the world beside, flourished with no meane commendations throughout all Barbarie, which in those dayes was tributary to the King of Sicilie. Among other persons, deserving most to be respected, the renowned vertues, and affability of this gallant Prince Gerbino, was understood by the beautious Daughter to the King of Tunis, who by such as had seene her, was reputed to be one of the rarest creatures, the best conditioned, and of the truest noble spirit, that ever Nature framed in her very choicest pride of Art.

Of famous, vertuous, and worthy men, it was continually her cheefest delight to heare, and the admired actions of valiant Gerbino, reported to her by many singular discoursers: such as could best describe him, with language answerable to his due deservings, won such honourable entertainment in her understanding soule, that they were most affectionately pleasing to her, and in recapitulating (over and over againe) his manifold and heroycall perfections; meere speech made her extreamely amorous of him, nor willingly would she lend an eare to any other discourse, but that which tended to his honour and advancement.

On the other side, the fame of her incomparable beauty, with addition of her other infinite singularities beside; as the World had given eare to innumberlesse places, so Sicilie came at length acquainted therewith, in such flowing manner, as was truly answerable to her merit. Nor seemed this as a bare babling rumour, in the Princely hearing of royall Gerbino; but was embraced with such a reall apprehension, and the entire probation of a true understanding: that he was no lesse enflamed with noble affection towards her, then she expressed the like in vertuous opinion of him. Wherefore, awaiting such convenient opportunity, when he might entreat license of his Grand-father, for his owne going to Thunis, under colour of some honourable occasion, for the earnest desire he had to see her: he gave charge to some of his especiall friends (whose affaires required their presence in those parts) to let the Princesse understand, in such secret manner as best they could devise, what noble affection he bare unto her, devoting himselfe onely to her service.

One of his chosen friends thus put in trust, being a Jeweller, a man of singular discretion, and often resorting to Ladies for sight of his Jewels, winning like admittance to the Princesse: related at large unto her, the honourable affection of Gerbino, with full tender of his person to her service, and that she onely was to dispose of him. Both the message and the messenger, were most graciously welcome to her, and flaming in the selfe-same affection towards him: as a testimony thereof, one of the very choisest Jewels which she bought of him, she sent by him to the Prince Gerbino, it being received by him with such joy and contentment, as nothing in the world could be more pleasing to him. So that afterward, by the trusty carriage of this Jeweller, many Letters and Love-tokens passed betweene them, each being as highly pleased with this poore, yet happy kind of entercourse, as if they had seene and conversed with one another.

Matters proceeding on in this manner, and continuing longer then their love-sick passions easily could permit, yet neither being able to finde out any other meanes of helpe; it fortuned that the King of Thunis promised his daughter in marriage to the King of Granada, whereat she grew exceedingly sorrowfull, perceiving, that not onely she should be sent further off, by a large distance of way from her friend, but also be deprived utterly, of all hope ever to enjoy him. And if she could have devised any meanes, either by secret flight from her Father, or any way else to further her intention, she would have adventured it for the Princes sake. Gerbino in like maner hearing of this purposed marriage, lived in a hell of torments, consulting oftentimes with his soule, how he might be possessed of her by power, when she should be sent by Sea to her husband, or private stealing her away from her Fathers Court before: with these and infinite other thoughts, was he incessantly afflicted, both day and night.



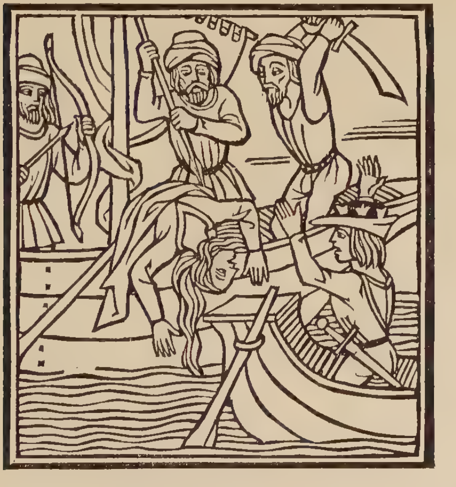
By some unhappy accident or other, the King of Thunis heard of this their secret love, as also of Gerbinoes purposed policy to surprize her, and how likely he was to effect it, in regard of his manly valour, and store of stout friends to assist him. Hereupon, when the time was come, that he would convey his daughter thence to her marriage, and fearing to be prevented by Gerbino: he sent to the King of Sicilie, to let him understand his determination, craving safe conduct from him, without impeachment of Gerbino, or any one else, untill such time as his intent was accomplished. King Gulielmo being aged, and never acquainted with the affectionate proceedings of Gerbino, nor any doubtfull reason to urge this security from him, in a case convenient to be granted: yeelded the sooner thereto right willingly, and as a signall of his honourable meaning, he sent him his royall Glove, with a full confirmation for his safe conduct.

No sooner were these Princely assurances received, but a goodly ship was prepared in the Port of Carthagena, well furnished with all thinges thereto belonging, for the sending his daughter to the King of Granada, waiting for nothing else but best favouring windes. The young Princesse, who understood and saw all this great preparation; secretly sent a servant of hers to Palermo, giving him especiall charge, on her behalfe, to salute the Prince Gerbino, and to tell him withall, that (within few dayes) she must be transported to Granada. And now opportunity gave faire and free meanes, to let the world know, whether he were a man of that magnanimous spirit, or no, as generall opinion had formerly conceived of him, and whether he affected her so firmely, as by many close messages he had assured her. He who had the charge of this embassie, effectually performed it, and then returned backe to Thunis.

The Prince Gerbino, having heard this message from his divine Mistresse, and knowing also, that the King his Grandfather, had past his safe conduct to the King of Thunis, for peaceable passage through his Seas: was at his wits end, in this urgent necessity, what might best bee done. Notwithstanding, moved by the setled constancy of his plighted Love, and the speeches delivered to him by the messenger from the Princesse: to shew himselfe a man endued with courage, he departed thence unto Messina, where he made ready two speedy gallies, and fitting them with men of valiant disposition, set away to Sardignia, as making full account, that the Ship which carried the Princesse, must come along that Coast. Nor was his expectation therein deceived: for, within few dayes after, the Ship (not over-swiftly winded) come sailing neere to the place where they attended for her arrivall; whereof Gerbino had no sooner gotten a sight, but to animate the resolutes which were in his company, thus he spake.

Gentlemen, if you be those men of valour, as heretofore you have bene reputed, I am perswaded, that there are some among you, who either formerly have, or now instantly do feele, the all-commanding power of Love, without which (as I thinke) there is not any mortall man, that can have any goodnesse or vertue dwelling in him. Wherefore, if ever you have bene amorously affected, or presently have any apprehension thereof, you shall the more easily judge of what I now aime at. True it is, that I do love, and love hath guided me to be comforted, and manfully assisted by you, because in yonder Ship, which you see commeth on so gently under saile (even as if she offered her selfe to be our prize) not onely is the Jewell which I most esteeme, but also mighty and unvalewable treasure, to be wonne without any difficult labour, or hazard of a dangerous fight, you being men of such undauntable courage. In the honour of which victory, I covet not any part or parcell, but onely a Ladie, for whose sake I have undertaken these Armes, and freely give you all the rest contained in the Ship. Let us set on them, Gentlemen, and my deerest friends; couragiously let us assaile the ship, you see how the wind favours us, and (questionlesse) in so good an action, Fortune will not faile us.

Gerbino needed not to have spoken so much, in perswading them to seize so rich a booty, because the men of Messina were naturally addicted to spoile and rapine: and before the Prince began his Oration, they had concluded to make the ship their purchase. Wherefore, giving a lowde shout, according to their Country manner, and commanding their Trumpets to sound chearfully, they rowed on a maine with their Oares, and (in meere despight) set upon the ship. But before the Gallies could come neere her, they that had the charge and managing of her, perceyving with what speede they made towards them, and no likely meanes of escaping from them, resolvedly they stood upon their best defence, for now it was no time to be slothfull.



The Prince being come neere to the Ship, commanded that the Patrones should come to him, except they would adventure the fight. When the Sarazines were thereof advertised, and understood also what he demanded, they returned answer: That their motion and proceeding in this manner, was both against Law and plighted faith, which was promised by the King of Sicilie, for their safe passage through the Sea by no meanes to be mollested or assailed. In testimony whereof, they shewed his Glove, avouching moreover, that neither by force (or otherwise) they would yeelde, or deliver him any thing which they had aboorde their Ship.

Gerbino espying his gracious Mistresse on the Ships decke, and she appearing to be farre more beautifull then Fame had made relation of her: being much more enflamed now, then formerly he had bin, replyed thus when they shewed the Glove. We have (quoth he) no Faulcon here now, to be humbled at the sight of your Glove: and therefore, if you will not deliver the Lady, prepare your selves for fight, for we must have her whether you will or no. Hereupon, they began to let flie (on both sides) their Darts and arrowes, with stones sent in violent sort from their slings, thus continuing the fight a long while, to very great harme on either side. At the length, Gerbino perceiving, that small benefit would redound to him, if he did not undertake some other kinde of course: he tooke a small Pinnace, which purposely he brought with him from Sardignia, and setting it on a flaming fire, conveyed it (by the Gallies help) close to the ship. The Sarazines much amazed thereat, and evidently perceiving, that either they must yeeld or dye; brought their Kings daughter to the prow of the ship, most greevously weeping and wringing her hands. Then calling Gerbino, to let him behold their resolution, there they slew hir before his face, and afterward, throwing her body into the Sea, saide: Take her, there we give her to thee, according to our bounden duty, and as thy perjury hath justly deserved.

This sight was not a little greevous to the Prince Gerbino, who madded now with this their monstrous cruelty, and not caring what became of his owne life, having lost her for whom he onely desired to live: not dreading their Darts, Arrowes, slinged stones, or what violence els they could use against him; he leapt aboord their ship, in despight of all that durst resist him, behaving himselfe there like a hunger-starved Lyon, when he enters among a heard of beasts, tearing their carkasses in pieces both with his teeth and pawes. Such was the extreme fury of this poore Prince, not sparing the life of any one, that durst appeare in his presence; so that what with the bloody slaughter, and violence of the fires encreasing in the Ship; the Mariners got such wealth as possibly they could save, and suffering the Sea to swallow the rest, Gerbino returned unto his Gallies againe, nothing proud of this so ill-gotten victory.

Afterward, having recovered the Princesse dead body out of the Sea, and enbalmed it with sighes and teares: he returned backe into Sicilie, where he caused it to be most honourably buried, in a little Island, named Ustica, face to face confronting Trapanum. The King of Thunis hearing these disastrous Newes, sent his Ambassadors (habited in sad mourning) to the aged King of Sicilie, complaining of his faith broken with him, and how the accident had falne out. Age being sodainly incited to anger, and the King extreamly offended at this injury, seeing no way whereby to deny him justice, it being urged so instantly by the Ambassadors: caused Gerbino to be apprehended, and he himselfe (in regard that none of his Lords and Barons would therein assist him, but laboured to divert him by their earnest importunity) pronounced the sentence of death on the Prince, and commanded to have him beheaded in his presence; affecting rather, to dye without an heire, then to be thought a King voyde of justice. So these two unfortunate Lovers, never enjoyed the very least benefite of their long wished desires: ended both their lives in violent manner.

THE FIFT NOVELL

WHEREIN IS PLAINLY PROVED, THAT LOVE CANNOT BE ROOTED UPPE, BY ANY HUMANE POWER OR PROVIDENCE; ASPECIALLY IN SUCH A SOULE, WHERE IT HATH BENE REALLY APPREHENDED.

The *three Brethren to Isabella, slew a Gentleman that secretly loved her. His ghost appeared to her in her sleepe, and shewed her in what place they had buried his body. She (in silent manner) brought away his head, and putting it into a pot of earth, such as Flowers, Basile, or other sweete hearbes are usually set in; she watered it (a long while) with her teares. Wherefore her Brethren having intelligence; soone after she dyed, with meere conceite of sorrow.*

The Novell of Madame Eliza being finished, and some-what commended by the King, in regard of the Tragicall conclusion; Philomena was enjoyned to proceede next with her discourse. She being overcome with much compassion, for the hard Fortunes of Noble Gerbino, and his beautifull Princesse, after an extreame and vehement sighe, thus she spake. My Tale (worthy Ladies) extendeth not to persons of so high birth or quality, as they were of whom Madame Eliza gave you relation: yet (peradventure) it may prove to be no lesse pittifull. And now I remember my selfe, Messina so lately spoken of, is the place where this accident also happened.

In Messina there dwelt three young men, Brethren, and Merchants by their common profession, who becomming very rich by the death of their Father, lived in very good fame and repute. Their Father was of San Gemignano, and they had a Sister named Isabella, young, beautifull, and well conditioned; who upon some occasion, as yet remained unmarried. A proper youth, being a Gentleman borne in Pisa, and named Lorenzo, as a trusty factor or servant, had the managing of the brethrens businesse and affaires. This Lorenzo being of comely personage, affable, and excellent in his behaviour, grew so gracious in the eyes of Isabella, that she affoorded him many very respective lookes, yea, kindnesses of no common quality. Which Lorenzo taking notice of, and observing by degrees from time to time, gave over all other beauties in the City, which might allure any affection from him, and onely fixed his heart on her, so that their love grew to a mutuall embracing, both equally respecting one another, and entertaining kindnesses, as occasion gave leave.

Long time continued this amorous league of love, yet not so cunningly concealed, but at the length, the secret meeting of Lorenzo and Isabella, to ease their poore soules of Loves oppressions, was discovered by the eldest of the Brethren, unknowne to them who were thus betrayed. He being a man of great discretion, although this sight was highly displeasing to him: yet notwithstanding, he kept it to himselfe till the next morning, labouring his braine what might best be done in so urgent a case. When day was come, he resorted to his other Brethren, and told them what he had seene in the time past, betweene their sister and Lorenzo.

Many deliberations passed on in this case; but after all, thus they concluded together, to let it proceede on with patient supportance, that no scandall might ensue to them, or their Sister, no evill acte being (as yet) committed. And seeming, as if they knew not of their love, had a wary eye still upon her secret walkes, awaiting for some convenient time, when without their owne prejudice, or Isabellaes knowledge, they might safely breake off this their stolne love, which was altogether against their liking. So, shewing no worse countenance to Lorenzo, then formerly they had done, but imploying and conversing with him in kinde manner; it fortuned, that riding (all three) to recreate themselves out of the City, they tooke Lorenzo in their company, and when they were come to a solitarie place, such as best suited with their vile purpose: they ran sodainly upon Lorenzo, slew him, and afterward enterred his body, where hardly it could be discovered by any one. Then they returned backe to Messina, and gave it forth (as a credible report) that they had sent him abroad about their affaires, as formerly they were wont to do: which every one verily beleeved, because they knew no reason why they should conceite any otherwise.

Isabella, living in expectation of his returne, and perceiving his stay to her was so offensive long: made many demands to her Brethren, into what parts they had sent him, that his tarrying was so quite from all wonted course. Such was her importunate speeches to them, that they taking it very discontentedly, one of them returned her this frowning answer. What is your meaning Sister, by so many questionings after Lorenzo? What urgent affaires have you with him, that makes you so impatient upon his absence? If hereafter you make any more demands for him, we shall shape you such a reply, as will be but little to your liking. At these harsh words, Isabella fell into abundance of teares, where-among she mingled many sighes and groanes, such as were able to overthrow a farre stronger constitution: so that, being full of feare and dismay, yet no way distrusting her brethrens cruell deede; she durst not question any more after him.

In the silence of darke night, as she lay afflicted in her bed, oftentimes would she call for Lorenzo, entreating his speedy returning to her: And then againe, as if he had bene present with her, she checkt and reproved him for his so long absence. One night amongst the rest, she being growen almost hopelesse, of ever seeing him againe, having a long while wept and greevously lamented; her senses and faculties utterly spent and tired, that she could not utter any more complaints, she fell into a trance or sleepe; and dreamed, that the ghost of Lorenzo appeared unto her, in torne and unbefitting garments, his lookes pale, meager, and staring: and (as she thought) thus spake to her. My deere love Isabella, thou dost nothing but torment thy selfe, with calling on me, accusing me for overlong tarrying from thee: I am come therefore to let thee know, that thou canst not enjoy my company any more, because the very same day when last thou sawest me, thy brethren most bloodily murthered me. And acquainting her with the place where they had buried his mangled body: hee strictly charged her, not to call him at any time afterward, and so vanished away.

The young Damosell awaking, and giving some credite to her Vision, sighed and wept exceedingly; and after she was risen in the morning, not daring to say any thing to her brethren, she resolutely determined, to go see the place formerly appointed her, onely to make triall, if that which she seemed to see in her sleepe, should carry any likelyhood of truth. Having obtained favour of her brethren, to ride a dayes journey from the City, in company of her trusty Nurse, who long time had attended on her in the house, and knew the secret passages of her love: they rode directly to the designed place, which being covered with some store of dried leaves, and more deeply sunke then any other part of the ground therabout, they digged not farre, but they found the body of murthered Lorenzo, as yet very little corrupted or impaired, and then perceived the truth of her vision.

Wisedome and government so much prevailed with her, as to instruct her soule, that her teares spent there, were meerley fruitelesse and in vaine, neither did the time require any long tarrying there. Gladly would she have carried the whole body with her, secretly to bestow honourable enterment on it, but it exceeded the compasse of her ability. Wherefore, in regard she could not have all, yet she would be possessed of a part, and having brought a keene razor with her, by helpe of the Nurse, she divided the head from the body, and wrapped it up in a Napkin, which the Nurse conveyed into her lap, and then laide the body in the ground againe. Thus being undiscovered by any, they departed thence, and arrived at home in convenient time, where being alone by themselves in the Chamber: she washed the head over and over with her teares, and bestowed infinite kisses thereon.

Not long after, the Nurse having brought her a large earthen pot, such as we use to set Basile, Marjerom, Flowers, or other sweet hearbes in, and shrouding the head in a silken Scarfe, put it into the pot, covering it with earth, and planting divers rootes of excellent Basile therein, which she never watered, but either with her teares, Rose water, or water distilled from the Flowers of Oranges. This pot she used continually to sitte by, either in her chamber, or any where else: for she carried it alwaies with her, sighing and breathing foorth sad complaints thereto, even as if they had beene uttered to her Lorenzo, and day by day this was her continuall exercise, to the no meane admiration of her bretheren, and many other friends that beheld her.

So long she held on in this mourning manner, that, what by the continuall watering of the Basile, and putrifaction of the head, so buried in the pot of earth; it grew very flourishing, and most odoriferous to such as scented it, that as no other Basile could possibly yeeld so sweete a savour. The neighbours noting this behaviour in her, observing the long continuance thereof, how much her bright beauty was defaced, and the eyes sunke into her head by incessant weeping, made many kinde and friendly motions, to understand the reason of her so violent oppressions; but could not by any meanes prevaile with her, or win any discovery by her Nurse, so faithfull was she in secrecie to her. Her brethren also waxed wearie of this carriage in her; and having very often reproved her for it, without any other alteration in her: at length, they closely stole away the potte of Basile from her, for which she made infinite wofull lamentations, earnestly entreating to have it restored againe, avouching that she could not live without it.

Perceiving that she could not have the pot againe, she fell into an extreame sicknesse, occasioned onely by her ceaselesse weeping: and never urged she to have any thing, but the restoring of her Basile pot. Her brethren grew greatly amazed thereat, because she never called for ought else beside; and thereupon were very desirous to ransacke the pot to the very bottome. Having emptied out all the earth, they found the Scarfe of silke, wherein the head of Lorenzo was wrapped; which was (as yet) not so much consumed, but by the lockes of haire, they knew it to be Lorenzoes head, whereat they became confounded with amazement.

Fearing least their offence might come to open publication, they buried it very secretly; and, before any could take notice thereof, they departed from Messina, and went to dwell in Naples, Isabella crying and calling still for her pot of Basile, being unable to give over mourning, dyed within a few dayes after. Thus have you heard the hard fate of poore Lorenzo and his Isabella. Within no long while after, when this accident came to be publikely knowne, an excellent ditty was composed thereof beginning thus.

Cruell and unkinde was the Christian,
That robd me of my Basiles blisse, etc.

* * *

THE SIXTH NOVELL

DESCRIBING THE ADMIRABLE ACCIDENTS OF FORTUNE; AND THE MIGHTY PREVAILING POWER OF LOVE.

A BEAUTIFULL *young Virgine, named Andreana, became enamoured of a young Gentleman called Gabriello. In conference together, she declared a dreame of hers to him, and he another of his to her; whereupon Gabriello fell downe sodainly dead in her armes. She, and her Chamber-maide were apprehended, by the Officers belonging to the Seigneury, as they were carrying Gabriello, to lay him before his owne doore. The Potestate offering violence to the Virgin, and she resisting him vertuously: it came to the understanding of her Father, who approved the innocence of his daughter, and compassed her deliverance. But she afterward, being weary of all worldly felicities, entred into Religion, and became a Nun.*

The Novell which Madam Philomena had so graciously related, was highly pleasing unto the other Ladies; because they had oftentimes heard the Song, without knowing who made it, or upon what occasion it was composed. But when the King saw that the Tale was ended: he commanded Pamphilus, that he should follow in his due course: whereupon he spake thus.

The dreame already recounted in the last Novell, doth minister matter to me, to make report of another Tale, wherein mention is made of two severall dreames; which divined as well what was to ensue, as the other did what had hapned before. And no sooner were they finished in the relation, by both the parties which had formerly dreampt them, but the effects of both as soddainly followed.

Worthy Ladies, I am sure it is not unknowne to you, that it is, and hath bene a generall passion, to all men and women living, to see divers and sundry things while they are sleeping. And although (to the sleeper) they seeme most certaine, so that when he awaketh, he judgeth the trueth of some, the likelyhood of others, and some beyond all possibility of truth: yet notwithstanding, many dreames have bene observed to happen; and very strangely have come to passe. And this hath bene a grounded reason for some men, to give as great credit to such things as they see sleeping, as they do to others usually waking. So that, according unto their dreames, and as they make construction of them, that are sadly distasted, or merrily pleased, even as (by them) they either feare or hope. On the contrary, there are some, who will not credit any dreame whatsoever, untill they be falne into the very same danger which formerly they saw, and most evidently in their sleepe.

I meane not to commend either the one or other, because they do not alwayes fall out to be true; neither are they at all times lyars. Now, that they prove not all to be true, we can best testifie to our selves. And that they are not alwayes lyars, hath already sufficiently bene manifested, by the Discourse of Madame Philomena, and as you shall perceive by mine owne, which next commeth in order to salute you. Wherefore, I am of this opinion, that in matters of good life, and performing honest actions; no dreame is to be feared presaging the contrary, neither are good works any way to be hindred by them. Likewise, in matters of bad and wicked quality, although our dreames may appeare favourable to us, and our visions flatter us with prosperous successe: yet let us give no credence unto the best, nor addict our minds to them of contrary Nature. And now we will proceed to our Novell.

In the Citie of Brescia, there lived somtime a Gentleman, named Messer Negro da Ponte Cararo, who (among many other children) had a daughter called Andreana, yong, and beautifull, but as yet unmarried. It fortuned, that shee fell in love with a Neighbour, named Gabriello; a comely young Gentleman, of affable complexion, and graciously conditioned. Which love was (with like kindenesse) welcommed and entertained by him; and by the furtherance of her Chamber-maide, it was so cunningly carried, that in the Garden belonging to Andreanaes Father, she had many meetings with her Gabriello. And solemne vowes being mutually passed betweene them, that nothing but death could alter their affection: by such ceremonious words as are used in marriage, they maried themselves secretly together, and continued their stolne chaste pleasures with equall contentment to them both.

It came to passe, that Andreana sleeping in her bed, dreamed, that shee met with Gabriello in the Garden, where they both embracing lovingly together, she seemed to see a thing blacke and terrible, which sodainely issued forth of his body, but the shape therof she could not comprehend. It rudely seized upon Gabriello, and in despight of her utmost strength, with incredible force snatched him out of her armes, and sinking with him into the earth, they never after did see one another. Whereupon, overcome with extremity of greefe and sorrow, presently she awaked, being then not a little joyfull, that she found no such matter as she feared, yet continued very doubtfull of her dreame. In regard whereof, Gabriello being desirous to visite her the night following: she laboured very diligently to hinder his comming to her; yet knowing his loyall affection toward her, and fearing least he should grow suspitious of some other matter, she welcommed him into the Garden, where gathering both white and Damaske Roses (according to the nature of the season) at length, they sate downe by a very goodly Fountaine, which stoode in the middest of the Garden.

After some small familiar Discourse passing betweene them, Gabriello demanded of her, upon what occasion shee denyed his comming thither the night before, and by such a sodaine unexpected admonition? Andreana told him, that it was in regard of a horrid Dreame, wherewith her soule was perplexed the precedent night, and doubt what might ensue thereon. Gabriello hearing this, began to smile, affirming to her, that it was an especial note of folly, to give any credit to idle dreames: because (oftentimes) they are caused by excesse of feeding, and continually are observed to be meere lyes. For (quoth he) if I had any superstitious beleefe of Dreames, I should not then have come hither now: yet not so much as being dismayed by your dreame, but for another of mine owne, which I am the more willing to acquaint you withall.

Me thought, I was in a goodly delightfull Forrest, in the Noble exercise of sportfull hunting, and became there possessed of a young Hinde, the verie loveliest and most pleasing beast that was ever seene. It seemed to be as white as snow, and grew (in a short while) so familiar with me, that by no meanes it would forsake mee. I could not but accept this rare kindnes in the beast, and fearing least I should loose it, I put a collar of Gold about the necke thereof, and fastned it into a chaine of Gold also, which then I held strongly in my hand. The Hind afterward couched downe by me, laying his head mildely in my lap; and on the sodaine, a black Grey-hound bitch came rushing on us (but whence, or how, I could not imagine) seeming halfe hunger-starved, and very ugly to looke upon. At me she made her full carreere, without any power in me of resistance, and putting her mouth into the left side of my bosom, griped it so mainly with her teeth, that (me thought) I felt my heart quite bitten through, and she tugged on still, to take it wholly away from me; by which imagined paine and anguish I felt, instantly I awaked. Laying then my hand upon my side, to know whether any such harme had befalne me, or no, and finding none, I smiled at mine owne folly, in making such a frivolous and idle search. What can be said then in these or the like cases? Divers times I have had as ill seeming dreames, yea, and much more to be feared, yet never any thing hurtfull to me, followed thereon; and therefore I have alwayes made the lesse account of them.

The young Maiden, who was still dismayed by her owne Dreame, became much more afflicted in her minde, when shee had heard this other reported by Gabriello: but yet to give him no occasion of distast, she bare it out in the best manner she could devise to doe. And albeit they spent the time in much pleasing discourse, maintained with infinite sweete kisses on either side: yet was she still suspitious, but knew not whereof; fixing her eyes oftentimes upon his face, and throwing strange lookes to all parts of the Garden, to catch hold on any such blacke ugly sight, whereof he had formerly made description to her. As thus she continued in these afflicting feares, it fortuned, that Gabriello sodainly breathing forth a very vehement sighe, and throwing his armes fast about her, said: O helpe me dear Love, or else I dye; and, in speaking the words, fell downe upon the ground. Which the yong Damosel perceiving, and drawing him into her lappe, weeping saide: Alas sweete Friend, What paine doest thou feele?

Gabriello answered not one word, but being in an exceeding sweate, without any ability of drawing breath, very soon after gave up the ghost. How greevous this strange accident was to poore Andreana, who loved him as deerely as her owne life: you that have felt loves tormenting afflictions, can more easily conceive, then I relate. Wringing her hands, and weeping incessantly, calling him, rubbing his temples, and using all likely meanes to reduce life: she found all her labour to be spent in vaine, because he was starke dead indeed, and every part of his body as cold as ice: whereupon, she was in such wofull extremity, that she knew not what to do, or say. All about the Garden she went weeping, in infinite feares and distraction in soule, calling for her Chamber maid, the only secret friend to their stolne meetings, and told her the occasion of this sodaine sorrow. After they had sighed and mourned awhile, over the dead body of Gabriello, Andreana in this manner spake to her maide.

Seeing Fortune hath thus bereft me of my Love, mine owne life must needs be hatefull to me: but before I offer any violence to my selfe, let us devise some convenient meanes, as may both preserve mine honour from any touch or scandall, and conceale the secret love passing betweene us: but yet in such honest sort, that this body (whose blessed soule hath too soone forsaken it) may be honourably enterred. Whereto her Mayde thus answered: Mistresse, never talke of doing any violence to your selfe, because by such a blacke and dismall deed, as you have lost his kind company here in this life, so shall you never more see him in the other world: for immediately you sinke downe to hell, which foule place cannot be a receptacle for his faire soule, that was endued with so many singular vertues. Wherefore, I hold it farre better for you, to comfort your selfe by all good meanes, and with the power of fervent praier, to fight against all desperate intruding passions, as a truly vertuous minde ought to doe. Now, as concerning his enterrement, the meanes is readily prepared for you here in this Garden, where never he hath bene seene by any, or his resorting hither knowne, but onely to our selves. If you will not consent to have it so, let you and I convey his body hence, and leave it in such an apt place, where it may be found to morrow morning: and being then carried to his owne house, his friends and kindred will give it honest buriall.

Andreana, although her soule was extraordinarily sorrowfull, and teares flowed abundantly from her eyes; yet she listned attentively to hir maids counsell; allowing her first advice against desperation, to be truly good; but to the rest thus she replyed. God forbid (quoth she) that I should suffer so deere a loving friend, as he hath alwayes shewed himselfe to me; nay, which is much more, my husband; by sacred and solemne vowes passed betweene us, to be put into the ground basely, and like a dog, or else to be left in the open street. He hath had the sacrifice of my virgin teares, and if I can prevaile, he shall have some of his kindreds, as I have instantly devised, what (in this hard case) is best to be done. Forthwith she sent the maid to her Chamber, for divers elles of white Damaske lying in her Chest, which when she had brought, they spread it abroad on the grasse, even in the manner of a winding sheete, and therein wrapped the body of Gabriello, with a faire wrought pillow lying under his head, having first (with their teares) closed his mouth and eyes, and placed a Chaplet of Flowers on his head, covering the whole shrowd over in the same manner; which being done, thus she spake to her Maid.

The doore of his owne house is not farre hence, and thither (betweene us two) he may be easily caried, even in this maner as we have adorned him; where leaving him in his owne Porch, we may returne back before it be day: and although it will be a sad sight to his friends, yet because he dyed in mine armes, and we being so well discharged of the body, it will be a little comfort to me. When she had ended these words, which were not uttered without infinite teares, the maid entreated her to make hast, because the night swiftly passed on. At last, she remembred the Ring on her finger, wherewith

Gabriello had solemnly espoused her, and opening the shroud againe, she put it on his finger, saying; My deere and loving husband, if thy soule can see my teares, or any understanding do remaine in thy body, being thus untimely taken from me: receive the latest guift thou gavest me, as a pledge of our solemne and spotlesse marriage. So, making up the shroud againe as it should be, and conveighing it closely out of the Garden, they went on along with it, towardes his dwelling house.

As thus they passed along, it fortuned, that they were met and taken by the Guard or Watch belonging to the Potestate, who had bin so late abroad, about very earnest and important businesse. Andreana, desiring more the dead mans company, then theirs whom she had thus met withall, boldly spake thus to them. I know who and what you are, and can tell my selfe, that to offer flight will nothing availe me: wherfore, I am ready to go along with you before the Seigneury, and there will tell the truth concerning this accident. But let not any man among you, be so bold as to lay hand on me, or to touch me, because I yeeld so obediently to you; neyther to take any thing from this body, except hee intend that I shall accuse him. In which respect, not any one daring to displease her, shee went with the dead bodie to the Seigneurie, there to answere all Objections.

When notice heereof was given to the Potestate, he arose; and shee being brought foorth into the Hall before him, he questioned with her, how and by what meanes this accident happened. Beside, he sent for divers Physitians, to be informed by them, whether the Gentleman were poysoned, or otherwise murthered? All of them affirmed the contrarie, avouching rather, that some Impostumation had engendered neere his heart, which sodainly breaking, occasioned his as sodaine death. The Potestate hearing this, and perceiving that Andreana was little or nothing at all faulty in the matter, her beauty and good carriage, kindled a vilanous and lustful desire in him towards her, provoking him to the immodest motion, that upon granting his request, he would release her. But when he saw, that all his perswasions were to no purpose, hee sought to compasse his will by violence; which like a vertuous and valiant Virago, shee worthily withstood, defending her honour Nobly, and reprooving him with many injurious speeches, such as a lustfull Letcher justlie deserved.

On the morrow morning, these newes being brought to her Father, Messer Negro da Ponte Cararo, greeving thereat exceedingly, and accompanied with many of his friends, he went to the Pallace. Being there arrived, and informed of the matter by the Potestate: he demaunded (in teares) of his daughter, how, and by what meanes shee was brought thither? The Potestate would needs accuse her first, of outrage and wrong offered to him by her, rather then to tarry her accusing of him; yet, commending the yong Mayden, and her constancie, proceeded to say, that onely to prove her, he had made such a motion to her; but finding her so firme, his liking was now so addicted to her, that if her Father were so pleased to forget the remembrance of her former secret husband, he willingly would accept her in marriage.

While thus they continued talking, Andreana comming before her Father, the teares trickling mainly downe her cheekes, and falling at his feete, she began in this manner. Deare Father, I shall not neede to make an Historicall relation, either of my youthfull boldnesse or misfortunes, because you have both seene and knowne them: rather most humbly, I crave your pardon, for another errour by mee committed, in that, both without your leave and liking, I accepted the man as my troth-plighted husband, whom (above all other in the world) I most intirely affected. If my offence heerein doe challenge the forfeite of my life, then (good Father) I free you from any such pardon; because my onely desire is to dye your daughter, and in your gracious favour: with which words, in signe of her humility, she kissed his feete. Messer Negro da Ponte, being a man well in yeeres, and of a gentle nature, observing what his daughter saide, could not refraine from teares, and in his weeping, lovingly tooke her from the ground, speaking thus to her.

Daughter, I could have wisht, that thou hadst taken such an Husband, as (in my judgement) had bene best fitting for thee: yet if thou madest election of one answerable to thine owne good liking, I have no just reason to be offended therewith. My greatest cause of complaint is, thy too severe concealing it from me, and the small trust thou didst repose in me, because thou hast lost him before I knew him. Neverthelesse, seeing these occasions are thus come to passe, and accidents already ended, cannot possibly be re-called, it is my will, that as I would gladly have contented thee, by making him my Son in Law if he had lived, so I wil expresse the like love to him now he is dead. And so turning himselfe to his kindred and friends, lovingly requested of them, that they would grace Gabriello with most honourable obsequies.

By this time, the kindred and friends to the dead man (uppon noise of his death bruited abroad) were likewise come to the Pallace, yea, most of the men and women dwelling in the Cittie, the bodie of Gabriello being laide in the midst of the Court, upon the white Damaske shrowd given by Andreana, with infinite Roses and other sweet Flowers lying theron: and such was the peoples love to him, that never was any mans death, more to be bemoaned and lamented. Being delivered out of the Court, it was carried to buriall, not like a Burgesse or ordinary Citizen, but with such pompe as beseemed a Lord Baron, and on the shoulders of very noble Gentlemen, with great honor and reverence.

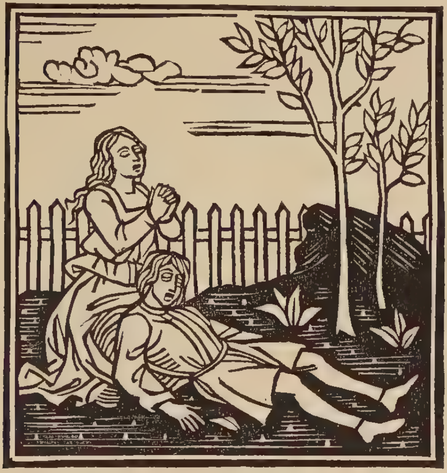
Within some few dayes after, the Potestate pursuing his former motion of mariage, and the father mooving it to his daughter, she would not by any meanes listen thereto. And he being desirous to give her contentment, delivered her and her Chamber-maid into a Religious Abbey, very famous for devotion and sanctity, where afterwards they ended their lives.

THE SEVENTH NOVELL

WHEREBY IS GIVEN TO UNDERSTAND, THAT LOVE AND DEATH DO USE THEIR POWER EQUALLY ALIKE, AS WELL UPON POORE AND MEANE PERSONS, AS ON THEM THAT ARE RICH AND NOBLE.

FAIRE *Simonida affecting Pasquino, and walking with him in a pleasant garden, it fortuned, that Pasquino rubbed his teeth with a leafe of Sage, and immediately fell downe dead. Simonida being brought before the bench of Justice, and charged with the death of Pasquino, she rubbed her teeth likewise with one of the leaves of the same Sage, as declaring what shee saw him do, and thereon she dyed also in the same manner.*

PAMPHILUS having ended his Tale, the King declaring an outward shew of compassion, in regard of Andreanaes disastrous Fortune; fixed his eye on Madam Æmilia, and gave her such an apparant signe, as expressed his pleasure, for her next succeeding in discourse; which being sufficient for her understanding, thus she began. Faire assembly, the Novell so lately delivered by Pamphilus, maketh me willing to report another to you, varying from it, in any kinde of resemblance; onely this excepted: that as Andreana lost her lover in a Garden, even so did she of whom I am now to speake. And being brought before the seate of Justice, according as Andreana was, freed her selfe from the power of the Law; yet neither by force, or her owne vertue, but by her sodaine and inopinate death. And although the nature of Love is such (according as we have oftentimes heeretofore maintained) to make his abiding in the houses of the Noblest persons; yet men and women of poore and farre inferiour quality, do not alwayes sit out of his reach, though enclosed in their meanest Cottages; declaring himselfe sometime as a powerfull commaunder in those humble places, as he doth in the richest and most imperious Palaces. As will plainly appeare unto you, either in all, or a great part of my Novell, whereto our Citie pleadeth some title; though, by the diversity of our discourses, talking of so many severall accidents; we have wandred into many other parts of the world, to make all answerable to our owne liking.



It is not any long time since, when there lived in our City of Florence, a young and beautifull Damosell, yet according to the nature of her condition; because she was the Daughter of a poore Father, and called by the name of Simonida. Now, albeit she was not supplied by any better means, then to maintaine her selfe by her owne painfull travell, and earne her bread before she could eate it, by carding and spinning to such as employed her; yet was she not so base or dejected a spirit, but had both courage and sufficient vertue, to understand the secret soliciting of love, and to distinguish the parts of well deserving, both by private behaviour and outward ceremony. As naturall instinct was her first tutor thereto, so wanted she not a second maine and urging motion, a chip hewed out of the like Timber, one no better in birth then her selfe, a proper young springall, named Pasquino, whose generous behaviour, and gracefull actions (in bringing her dayly wooll to spin, by reason his Master was a Clothier) prevailed upon her liking and affection.

Nor was he negligent in the observation of her amorous regards, but the Tinder tooke, and his soule flamed with the selfe same fire; making him as desirous of her loving acceptance, as possibly she could be of his: so that the commanding power of love, could not easily be distinguished in which of them it had the greater predominance. For every day as he brought her fresh supply of woolles, and found her seriously busied at her wheele: her soule would vent forth many deepe sighes, and those sighes fetch floods of teares from her eyes, thorough the singular good opinion she had conceyved of him, and earnest desire to enjoy him. Pasquino on the other side, as leysure gave him leave for the least conversing with her: his disease was every way answerable to hers, for teares stood in his eyes, sighes flew abroad, to ease the poore hearts afflicting oppressions, which though he was unable to conceale; yet would he seeme to clowd them cleanly, by entreating her that his Masters worke might be neatly performed, and with such speed as time would permit her, intermixing infinite praises of her artificiall spinning; and affirming withall, that the Quilles of Yearne received from her, were the choisest beauty of the whole peece; so that when other workewomen played, Simonida was sure to want no employment.

Hereupon, the one soliciting, and the other taking delight in being solicited; it came to passe, that often accesse bred the bolder courage, and over-much bashfulnesse became abandoned, yet no immodesty passing betweene them: but affection grew the better setled in them both, by interchangeable vowes of constant perseverance, so that death onely, but no disaster else had power to divide them. Their mutuall delight continuing on in this manner, with more forcible encreasing of their Loves equall flame: it fortuned, that Pasquino sitting by Simonida, told her of a goodly Garden, whereto he was desirous to bring her, to the end, that they might the more safely converse together, without the suspition of envious eyes. Simonida gave answer of her well-liking the motion, and acquainting her Father therewith, he gave her leave, on the Sunday following after dinner, to go fetch the pardon of S. Gallo, and afterwards to visit the Garden.

A modest yong maiden named Lagina, following the same profession, and being an intimate familiar friend, Simonida tooke along in her company, and came to the Garden appointed by Pasquino; where she found him readily expecting her comming, and another friend also with him, called Puccino (albeit more usually tearmed Strambo) a secret well-willer to Lagina, whose love became the more furthered by this friendly meeting. Each Lover delighting in his hearts chosen Mistresse, caused them to walke alone by themselves, as the spaciousnesse of the Garden gave them ample liberty: Puccino with his Lagina in one part, and Pasquino with his Simonida in another. The walke which they had made choise of, was by a long and goodly bed of Sage, turning and returning by the same bed as their conference ministred occasion, and as they pleased to recreate themselves, affecting rather to continue still there, then in any part of the Garden.

One while they would sit downe by the Sage bed, and afterward rise to walke againe, as ease and wearinesse seemed to invite them. At length, Pasquino chanced to crop a leafe of the Sage, wherewith he both rubbed his teeth and gummes, and champing it betweene them also, saying; that there was no better thing in the world to cleanse the teeth withall, after feeding. Not long had he thus champed the Sage in his teeth, returning to his former kinde of discoursing, but his countenance began to change very pale, his sight failed, and speech forsooke him; so that (in briefe) he fell downe dead. Which when Simonida beheld, wringing her hands, she cryed out for helpe to Strambo and Lagina, who immediately came running to her. They finding Pasquino not onely to be dead, but his body swolne, and strangely over-spred with foule black spots, both on his face, hands, and all parts else beside: Strambo cried out, saying; Ah wicked maide, what hast thou poisoned him?

These words and their shrill out-cries also were heard by Neighbours dwelling neere to the Garden, who comming in sodainly upon them, and seeing Pasquino lying dead, and hugely swoln, Strambo likewise complaining, and accusing Simonida to have poysoned him; she making no answer, but standing in a gastly amazement, all her senses meerely confounded, at such a strange and uncouth accident, in loosing him whom she so dearely loved: knew not how to excuse her selfe, and therefore every one verily beleeved, that Strambo had not unjustly accused her. Poore wofull maide, thus was she instantly apprehended, and drowned in her teares, they led her along to the Potestates Palace, where her accusation was justified by Strambo, Lagina, and two men more; the one named Atticciato, and the other Malagevole, fellowes and companions with Pasquino, who came into the Garden also upon the out-cry.

The Judge, without any delay at all, gave eare to the busines, and examined the case very strictly: but could by no meanes comprehend, that any malice should appeare in her towards him, nor that she was guiltie of the mans death. Wherefore, in the presence of Simonida, he desired to see the dead body, and the place where he fell downe dead, because there he intended to have her relate, how she saw the accident to happen, that her owne speeches might the sooner condemne her, whereas the case yet remained doubtfull, and farre beyond his comprehension. So, without any further publication, and to avoid the following of the turbulent multitude, they departed from the bench of Justice, and came to the place, where Pasquinoes body lay swolne like a Tunne. Demanding there questions, concerning his behaviour, when they walked there in conference together, and, not a little admiring the manner of his death, while he stood advisedly considering thereon.

She going to the bed of Sage, reporting the whole precedent history, even from the originall to the ending: the better to make the case understood, without the least colour of ill carriage towardes Pasquino; according as she had seene him do, even so did she plucke another leafe of the Sage, rubbing her teeth therewith, and champing it as he formerly did. Strambo, and the other intimate friends of Pasquino, having noted in what manner she used the Sage, and this appearing as her utmost refuge, either to acquit or condemne her: in presence of the Judge they smiled thereat, mocking and deriding whatsoever she saide, or did, and desiring (the more earnestly) the sentence of death against her, that her body might be consumed with fire, as a just punishment for her abhominable transgression.

Poore Simonida, sighing and sorrowing for her deere loves losse, and (perhappes) not meanly terrified, with the strict infliction of torment so severely urged and followed by Strambo and the rest standing dumb still, without answering so much as one word; by tasting of the same Sage, fell downe dead by the bed, even by the like accident Pasquino formerly did, to the admirable astonishment of all there present.

Oh poore infortunate Lovers, whose Starres were so inauspicious to you, as to finish both your mortall lives, and fervent love, in lesse limitation then a dayes space. How to censure of your deaths, and happines to ensue thereon, by an accident so strange and inevitable: it is not within the compasse of my power, but to hope the best, and so I leave you. But yet concerning Simonida her selfe, in the common opinion of us that remaine living: her true vertue and innocency (though Fortune was otherwise most cruell to her) would not suffer her to sinke under the testimony of Strambo, Lagina, Atticciato, and Malagevole, being but carders of wool, or perhaps of meaner condition; a happier course was ordained for her, to passe clearely from their infamous imputation, and follow her Pasquino, in the very same manner of death, and with such a speedy expedition.

The Judge standing amazed, and all there present in his company, were silent for a long while together: but, uppon better recollection of his spirits, thus he spake. This inconvenience which thus hath hapned, and confounded our senses with no common admiration; in mine opinion concerneth the bed of Sage, avouching it either to be venomous, or dangerously infected, which (neverthelesse) is seldom found in Sage. But to the end, that it may not be offensive to any more hereafter, I will have it wholly digd up by the rootes, and then to be burnt in the open Market place.

Hereupon, the Gardiner was presently sent for, and before the Judge would depart thence, he saw the bed of Sage digged up by the roots, and found the true occasion, whereby these two poore Lovers lost their lives. For, just in the middest of the bed, and at the maine roote, which directed all the Sage in growth; lay an huge mighty Toad, even weltring (as it were) in a hole full of poyson; by meanes whereof, in conjecture of the Judge, and all the rest, the whole bed of Sage became envenomed, occasioning every leafe thereof to be deadly in taste. None being so hardy, as to approach neere the Toade, they made a pile of wood directly over it, and setting it on a flaming fire, threw all the Sage thereinto, and so they were consumed together. So ended all further suite in Law, concerning the deaths of Pasquino and Simonida: whose bodies being carried to the Church of Saint Paul, by their sad and sorrowfull accusers, Strambo, Lagina, Atticciato and Malagevole, were buried together in one goodly Monument, for a future memory of their hard Fortune.

THE EIGHT NOVELL

WHEREIN IS AGAINE DECLARED, THE GREAT INDISCRETION AND FOLLY OF THEM, THAT THINK TO CONSTRAINE LOVE, ACCORDING TO THEIR WILL, AFTER IT IS CONSTANTLY SETLED BEFORE: WITH OTHER INSTRUCTIONS, CONCERNING THE UNSPEAKEABLE POWER OF LOVE.

JERONIMO *affecting a yong Maiden, named Silvestra, was constrained (by the earnest importunity of his Mother) to take a journey to Paris. At his returne home from thence againe, he found his love Silvestra married. By secret meanes, he got entrance into her house, and dyed upon the bed lying by her. Afterward, his body being carried to Church, to receive buriall, she likewise died there instantly upon his coarse.*

MADAM Æmilia had no sooner concluded her Novell, but Madam Neiphila (by the Kings command) began to speake in this manner. It seemeth to me (Gracious Ladies) that there are some such people to be found, who imagine themselves to know more, then all other else in the world beside, and yet indeede do know nothing at all: presuming (thorough this arrogant opinion of theirs) to imploy and oppose their senselesse understanding, against infallible grounded reason, yea, and to attempt courses, not only contrary to the counsell and judgement of men, but also to crosse the nature of divine ordination. Out of which saucy and ambitious presumption, many mighty harmes have already had beginning, and more are like to ensue uppon such boldnesse, because it is the ground of all evils.

Now, in regard that among all other naturall things, no one is lesse subject to take counsell, or can be wrought to contrariety, then Love, whose nature is such, as rather to run upon his owne rash consumption, then to be ruled by admonitions of the very wisest: my memory hath inspired it selfe, with matter incident to this purpose, effectually to approve, what I have already said. For I am now to speake of a woman who would appeare to have more wit, then either she had indeed, or appertained to her by any title. The matter also, wherein she would needs shew her studious judgement and capacity, was of much more consequence then she could deserve to meddle withall. Yet such was the issue of her fond presuming; that (in one instant) she expelled both love, and the soule of her owne sonne out of his body, where (doubtlesse) it was planted by divine favour and appointment.

In our owne City (according to true and ancient testimony) there dwelt sometime a very worthy and wealthy Merchant, named Leonardo Sighiero, who by his wife had one onely Sonne, called Jeronimo; and within a short while after his birth, Leonardo being very sicke, and having setled all his affaires in good order; departed out of this wretched life to a better. The Tutors and Governours of the Childe, thought it fittest to let him live with his Mother, where he had his whole education, though schooled among many other worthy neighbours children, according as in most Cities they use to do. Yong Jeronimo growing on in yeares, and frequenting dayly the company of his Schoole-fellowes and others: he would often sport (as the rest did) with the neighbors children, and much pretty pastime they found together.

In the harmlesse recreations of youth, graver judgements have often observed, that some especiall matter received then such originall, as greater effect hath followed thereon. And many times, parents and kindred have bene the occasion (although perhaps beyond their expectation) of very strange and extraordinary accidents, by names of familiarity passing betweene Boyes and Girles, as King and Queene, sweet heart and sweet heart, friend and friend, husband and wife, and divers other such like kind tearmes, prooving afterwards to be true indeed. It fell out so with our yong Jeronimo; for, among a number of pretty Damosels, daughters to men of especiall respect, and others of farre inferiour quality: a Taylors daughter, excelling the rest in favour and feature (albeit her Father was but poore) Jeronimo most delighted to sport withall; and no other titles passed betweene them, even in the hearing of their parents and friends, but wife and husband: such was the beginning of their yong affection, presaging (no doubt) effectually to follow.

Nor grew this familiarity (as yet) any way distasted, till by their daily conversing together, and enterchange of infinite pretty speeches, Jeronimo felt a strange alteration in his soule, with such enforcing and powerfull afflictions; as he was never well but in her company, nor she enjoyed any rest if Jeronimo were absent. At the length, this being noted by his Mother, she began to rebuke him, yea many times gave him both threatnings and blowes, which proving to no purpose, not hindering his accesse to her; she complained to his Tutors, and like one that in regard of her riches, thought to plant an Orange upon a blacke thorne, spake as followeth.

This Sonne of mine Jeronimo, being as yet but fouretеene years of age, is so deeply enamoured of a yong Girle, named Silvestra, daughter unto a poore Tailor, our neere dwelling neighbour: that if we do not send him out of her company, one day (perhaps) he may make her his wife, and yet without any knowledge of ours, which questionlesse would be my death. Otherwise, he may pine and consume himselfe away, if he see us procure her marriage to some other. Wherefore, hold it good, that to avoid so great an inconvenience, we should send Jeronimo some far distance hence, to remaine where some of our Factors are employed: because, when he shall be out of her sight, and their often meetings utterly disappointed; his affection to her will the sooner cease, by frustrating his hope for ever enjoying her, and so we shall have the better meanes, to match him with one of greater quality. The Tutors did like well of her advice, not doubting but it would take answerable effect: and therefore, calling Jeronimo into a private Parlor, one of them began in this manner.

Jeronimo, you are now growne to an indifferent stature, and (almost) able to take government of your selfe. It cannot then seeme any way inconvenient, to acquaint you with your deceased Fathers affaires, and by what good courses he came to such wealth. You are his onely sonne and heire, to whom he hath bequeathed his rich possessions (your Mothers moity evermore remembred) and travaile would now seeme fitting for you, as well to gaine experience in Trafficke and Merchandize, as also to let you see the worlds occurrences. Your Mother therefore (and we have thought it expedient) that you should journey from hence to Paris, there to continue for some such fitting time, as may grant you full and free opportunity, to survey what stocke of wealth is there employed for you, and to make you understand, how your Factors are furtherous to your affaires. Beside, this is the way to make you a man of more solid apprehension, and perfect instruction in civill courses of life; rather then by continuing here to see none but Lords, Barons, and Gentlemen, whereof we have too great a number. When you are sufficiently qualified there, and have learned what belongeth to a worthy Marchant, such as was Leonardo Sighiero your famous Father; you may returne home againe at your owne pleasure.

The youth gave them attentive hearing, and (in few words) returned them answer: That he would not give way to any such travaile, because he knew how to dispose of himselfe in Florence, as well as in any other place he should be sent too. Which when his Tutors heard, they reproved him with many severe speeches: and seeing they could win no other answer from him, they made returne thereof to his Mother. She storming extreamly thereat, yet not so much for denying the journey to Paris, as in regard of his violent affection to the Maide; gave him very bitter and harsh language. All which availing nothing, she began to speake in a more milde and gentle straine, entreating him with flattering and affable words, to be governed in this case by his Tutors good advice. And so farre (in the end) she prevailed with him, that he yeelded to live at Paris for the space of a yeare, but further time he would not grant, and so all was ended.

Jeronimo being gone to remaine at Paris, his love daily increasing more and more, by reason of his absence from Silvestra, under faire and friendly promises, of this moneth, and the next moneth, sending for him home; there they detained him two whole yeares together. Whereuppon, his love was growne to such an extremity, that he neither would, or could abide any longer there, but home he returned, before he was expected. His love Silvestra, by the cunning compacting of his Mother and Tutors, he found married to a Tent-makers Sonne; whereat he vexed and greeved beyond all measure. Nevertheless, seeing the case was now no way to be holpen; he strove to beare it with so much patience, as so great a wrong, and his hearts tormenting greefe, would give leave to doe.

Having found out the place where she dwelt, he began (as it is the custome of yong Lovers) to use divers daily walkes by her doore: as thinking in his minde, that her remembrance of him was constantly continued, as his was most intirely fixed on her. But the case was very strangely altred, because she was now growne no more mindfull of him, then if she had never seene him before. Or if she did any way remember him, it appeared to be so little, that manifest signes declared the contrary. Which Jeronimo very quickely perceived, albeit not without many melancholly perturbations. Notwithstanding, he laboured by all possible meanes, to recover her former kindnesse againe: but finding all his paines frivolously employed; he resolved to dye, and yet to compasse some speech with her before.

By meanes of a neere dwelling neighbour (that was his very deare and intimate friend) he came acquainted with every part of the house, and prevailed so far, that one evening, when she and her husband supt at a neighbours house; he compassed accesse into the same bed chamber, where Silvestra used most to lodge. Finding the Curtaines ready drawne, he hid himselfe behinde them on the further side of the bed, and so tarried there untill Silvestra and her husband were returned home, and laide downe in bed to take their rest. The husbands sences were soone overcome with sleepe, by reason of his painefull toyling all the day, and bodies that are exercised with much labour, are the more desirous to have ease.

She staying up last, to put out the light, and hearing her husband sleepe so soundly, that his snoring gave good evidence thereof: layed her selfe downe the more respectively, as being very loath any way to disease him, but sweetly to let him enjoy his rest.

Silvestra lay on the same side of the bed, where Jeronimo had hid himselfe behinde the Curtaines; who stepping softly to her in the darke, and laying his hand gently on her brest, saide: Deare Love, forbeare a little while to sleepe, for heere is thy loyall friend Jeronimo. The yong woman starting with amazement, would have cried out, but that he entreated her to the contrary; protesting, that he came for no ill intent to her, but onely to take his latest leave of her. Alas Jeronimo (quoth she) those idle dayes are past and gone, when it was no way unseemly for our youth, to entertaine equality of those desires, which then well agreed with our young blood. Since when, you have lived in forraine Countries, which appeared to me to alter your former disposition: for, in the space of two whole yeares, either you grew forgetfull of me (as change of ayre, may change affection) or (at the best) made such account of me, as I never heard the least salutation from you. Now you know me to be a married wife, in regard whereof, my thoughts have embraced that chaste and honourable resolution, not to minde any man but my husband; and therefore, as you are come hither without my love or license, so in like manner I do desire you to be gone. Let this priviledge of my Husbandes sound sleeping, be no colour to your longer continuing here, or encourage you to finde any further favour at mine hand: for if mine husband should awake, beside the danger that thereon may follow to you, I cannot but loose the sweet happinesse of peacefull life, which hitherto we have both mutually embraced.

The yong man, hearing these wordes, and remembring what loving kindnesse he had formerly found, what secret love Letters he had sent from Paris, with other private intelligences and tokens, which never came to her receite and knowledge, so cunningly his Mother and Tutors had carried the matter: immediately felt his heart-strings to breake, and lying downe upon the beds side by her, uttered these his very last words. Silvestra farewell, thou hast kilde the kindest heart that ever loved a woman: and speaking no more, gave up the ghost. She hearing these words delivered with an entire sighe, and deepe-fetcht groane, did not imagine the strange consequence following thereon; yet was mooved to much compassion, in regard of her former affection to him. Silent she lay an indifferent while, as being unable to returne him any answer, and looking when he would be gone, according as before she had earnestly entreated him. But when she perceyved him to lye so still, as neither word or motion came from him, she saide: Kinde Jeronimo, why doest thou not depart and get thee gone? So putting forth her hand, it hapned to light upon his face, which she felt to be as cold as yce: whereat marvailing not a little, as also at his continued silence, she jogged him, and felt his hands in like manner, which were stiffely extended forth, and all his body cold, as not having any life remaining in him, which greatly amazing her, and confounding her with sorrow beyond all measure, she was in such perplexity, that she could not devise what to do or say.

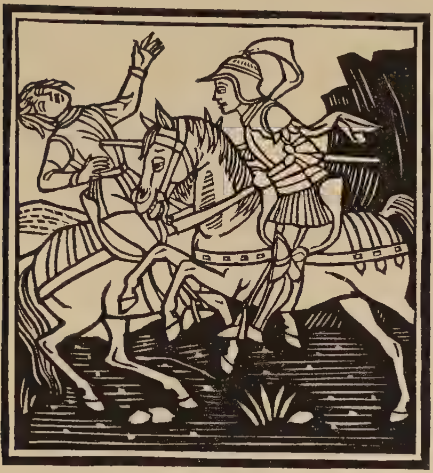
In the end, she resolved to try how her husband would take it, that so strange an accident should thus happen in his house, and putting the case as if it did not concerne them, but any other of the neighbours; awaking him first, demaunded of him what was best to be done, if a man should steale into a neighbours house, unknowne to him, or any of his family; and in his bed chamber to be found dead. He presently replyed (as not thinking the case concerned himselfe) that, the onely helpe in such an unexpected extremity, was to take the dead body, and convey it to his owne house, if he had any; whereby no scandall or reproach would follow to them, in whose house he had so unfortunately dyed. Hereupon she immediately arose, and lighting a candle, shewed him the dead body of Jeronimo, with protestation of every particular, both of her innocency, either of knowledge of his comming thither, or any other blame that could concerne her. Which he both constantly knowing and beleeving, made no more ceremony, but putting on his Garments, tooke the dead body upon his shoulders, and carried it to the Mothers doore, where he left it, and afterward returned to his owne house againe.

When day light was come, and the dead body found lying in the Porch, it moved very much greefe and amazement, considering, he had bin seene the day before, in perfect health to outward appearance. Nor neede we to urge any question of his Mothers sorrow upon this strange accident, who, causing his body to be carefully searched, without any blow, bruise, wound, or hurt uppon it, the Physitians could not give any other opinion, but that some inward conceyte of greefe had caused his death, as it did indeed, and no way otherwise. To the cheefe Church was the dead body carried, to be generally seene of all the people, his Mother and Friends weeping heavily by it, as many more did the like beside, because he was beloved of every one. In which time of universall mourning, the honest man (in whose house he dyed) spake thus to his wife: Disguise thy selfe in some decent manner, and go to the Church, where (as I heare) they have laide the body of Jeronimo. Crowde in amongest the Women, as I will do the like amongst the men, to heare what opinion passeth of his death, and whether we shall be scandalized thereby, or no.

Silvestra, who was now become full of pitty too late, quickely condiscended, as desiring to see him dead, whom sometime she dearly affected in life. And being come to the Church, it is a matter to be admired, if advisedly we consider on the powerfull working of love; for the heart of this woman, which the prosperous fortune of Jeronimo could not pierce, now in his wofull death split in sunder; and the ancient sparks of love so long concealed in the embers, brake foorth into a furious flame; and being violently surprized with extraordinary compassion, no sooner did she come neere to the dead body, where many stood weeping round about it; but strangely shrieking out aloud, she fell downe upon it: and even as extreamity of greefe finished his life, so did it hers in the same manner. For she moved neither hand nor foot, because her vitall powers had quite forsaken her. The women labouring to comfort her by all best meanes they could devise; did not take any knowledge of her, by reason of her disguised garments: but finding her dead indeed, and knowing her also to be Silvestra, being overcome with unspeakable compassion, and danted with no meane admiration, they stood strangely gazing each upon other.

Wonderfull crowds of people were then in the Church; and this accident being now noysed among the men, at length it came to her Husbands understanding, whose greefe was so great, as it exceeded all capacity of expression. Afterward he declared what had hapned in his house the precedent night, according as his wife had truly related to him, with all the speeches, which passed between Silvestra and Jeronimo; by which discourse, they generally conceived, the certaine occasion of both their sodaine deaths, which moved them to great compassion. Then taking the yong womans body, and ordering it as a coarse ought to be: they layed it on the same Biere by the yong man, and when they had sufficiently sorrowed for their disastrous fortune, they gave them honourable buriall both in one grave. So, this poore couple, whom love (in life) could not joyne together, death did unite in an inseparable conjunction.

THE NINTH NOVELL



WHEREBY APPEARETH, WHAT ILL SUCCESSE ATTENDETH ON THEM, THAT LOVE CONTRARY TO REASON: IN OFFERING INJURIE BOTH TO FRIENDSHIP AND MARRIAGE TOGETHER.

MESSER *Guiglielmo of Rossiglione having slaine Messer Guiglielmo Guardastagno, whom hee imagined to love his wife, gave her his heart to eate. Which she knowing afterward, threw her selfe out of an high window to the ground; and being dead, was then buried with her friend.*

WHEN the Novell of Madam Neiphila was ended, which occasioned much compassion in the whole assembly; the King who wold not infringe the priviledge granted to Dioneus, no more remaining to speake but they two, began thus. I call to minde (gentle Ladies) a Novell, which (seeing we are so farre entred into the lamentable accidents of successelesse love), will urge you unto as much commisseration, as that so lately reported to you. And so much the rather, because the person of whom we are to speake, were of respective quality; which approveth the accident to be more cruell, then those whereof we have formerly discoursed.

According as the people of Provence do report, there dwelt sometime in that jurisdiction, two noble Knights, each well possessed of Castles and followers; the one being named Messer Guiglielmo de Rossiglione, and the other Messer Guiglielmo Guardastagno. Now, in regard that they were both valiant Gentlemen, and singularly expert in actions of Armes; they loved together the more mutually, and held it as a kinde of custome to be seene in all Tiltes and Tournaments, or any other exercises of Armes, going commonly alike in their wearing garments. And although their Castles stood about five miles distant each from other, yet were they dayly conversant together, as very loving and intimate friends. The one of them, I meane Messer Guiglielmo de Rossilione, had to wife a very gallant beautifull Lady, of whom Messer Guardastagno (forgetting the lawes of respect and loyall friendship) became over-fondly enamoured, expressing the same by such outward meanes, that the Lady her selfe tooke knowledge thereof, and not with any dislike, as it seemed, but rather lovingly entertained; yet she grew not so forgetfull of her honour and estimation, as the other did of faith to his friend.

With such indiscretion was this idle love carried, that whether it sorted to effect, or no, I know not: but the husband perceived some such maner of behaviour, as he could not easily digest, nor thought it fitting to endure. Whereuppon, the league of friendly amity so long continued, began to faile in very strange fashion, and became converted into deadly hatred: which yet he very cunningly concealed, bearing an outward shew of constant friendship still, but (in his heart) he had vowed the death of Guardastagno. Nothing wanted, but by what meanes it might best be effected, which fell out to be in this manner. A publicke Joust or Tourney, was proclaimed by sound of Trumpet throughout all France, wherewith immediately, Messer Guiglielmo Rossiglione acquainted Messer Guardastagno, entreating him that they might further conferre theron together, and for that purpose to come and visit him, if he intended to have any hand in the businesse. Guardastagno being exceeding glad of this accident, which gave him liberty to see his Mistresse, sent answer backe by the messenger, that on the morrow at night, he would come and sup with Rossiglione; who upon this reply, projected to himselfe in what maner to kill him.

On the morrow, after dinner, arming himselfe, and two more of his servants with him, such as he had solemnly sworne to secrecy, he mounted on horsebacke, and rode on about a mile from his owne Castle, where he lay closely ambushed in a Wood, through which Guardastagno must needs passe. After he had stayed there some two houres space and more, he espyed him come riding with two of his attendants, all of them being unarmed, as no way distrusting any such intended treason. So soone as he was come to the place, where he had resolved to do the deed; hee rushed forth of the ambush, and having a sharpe Lance readily charged in his rest, ran mainly at him, saying: False villaine, thou art dead. Guardastagno, having nothing wherewith to defend himselfe, nor his servants able to give him any succour; being pierced quite through the body with the Lance, downe he fell dead to the ground, and his men (fearing the like misfortune to befall them) gallopped mainely backe againe to their Lords Castle, not knowing them who had thus murthered their Master, by reason of their armed disguises, which in those martiall times were usually worne.

Messer Guiglielmo Rossiglione, alighting from his horse, and having a keene knife ready drawne in his hand; opened therewith the brest of dead Guardastagno, and taking foorth his heart with his owne hands, wrapped it in the Bandelote belonging to his Lance, commanding one of his men to the charge thereof, and never to disclose the deed. So, mounting on horse-backe againe, and darke night drawing on apace, he returned home to his Castle. The Lady, who had heard before of Guardastagnoes intent, to suppe there that night, and (perhaps) being earnestly desirous to see him; marvailing at his so long tarrying, saide to her husband: Beleeve me Sir (quoth she) me thinkes it is somewhat strange, that Messer Guiglielmo Guardastagno delayes his comming so long, he never used to do so till now. I received tidings from him wife (saide he) that he cannot be here till to morrow. Whereat the Lady appearing to be displeased, concealed it to herselfe, and used no more words.

Rossiglione leaving his Lady, went into the Kitchin, where calling for the Cooke, he delivered him the heart, saying: Take this heart of a wilde Boare, which it was my good happe to kill this day, and dresse it in the daintiest manner thou canst devise to do; which being so done, when I am set at the Table, send it to me in a silver dish, with sauce beseeming so dainty a morsell. The Cooke tooke the heart, beleeving it to be no otherwise, then as his Lord had saide: and using his utmost skill in dressing it, did divide it into artificiall small slices, and made it most pleasing to be tasted. When supper time was come, Rossiglione sate downe at the table with his Lady: but he had little or no appetite at all to eate, the wicked deed which he had done so perplexed his soule, and made him to sit very strangely musing. At length, the Cooke brought in the dainty dish, which he himselfe setting before his wife, began to finde fault with his owne lacke of stomacke, yet provoked her with many faire speeches, to tast the Cooks cunning in so rare a dish.

The Lady having a good appetite indeede, when she had first tasted it, fed afterward so heartily thereon, that she left very little, or none at all remaining. When he perceived that all was eaten, he said unto her: Tell me Madame, how you do like this delicate kinde of meate? In good faith Sir (quoth she) in all my life I was never better pleased. Now trust mee Madame, answered the Knight, I do verily beleeve you, nor do I greatly wonder thereat, if you like that dead, which you loved so dearly being alive. When she heard these words, a long while she sate silent, but afterward saide. I pray you tell me Sir; what meate was this which you have made me to eate? Muse no longer (saide he) for therein I will quickly resolve thee. Thou hast eaten the heart of Messer Guiglielmo Guardastagno, whose love was so deare and precious to thee, thou false, perfidious, and disloyall Lady: I pluckt it out of his vile body with mine owne hands, and made my Cooke to dresse it for thy diet.

Poore Lady, how strangely was her soule afflicted, hearing these harsh and unpleasing speeches? Teares flowed aboundantly from her faire eies, and like tempestuous windes embowelled in the earth, so did vehement sighes breake mainly from her heart, and after a tedious time of silence, she spake in this manner. My Lord and husband, you have done a most disloyall and damnable deede, misguided by your owne wicked jealous opinion, and not by any just cause given you, to murther so worthy and Noble a Gentleman. I protest unto you upon my soule, which I wish to be confounded in eternall perdition, if ever I were unchaste to your bed, or allowed him any other favour, but what might well become so honourable a friend. And seeing my body hath bene made the receptacle for so precious a kinde of foode, as the heart of so valiant and courteous a Knight, such as was the Noble Guardastagno; never shall any other foode hereafter, have entertainment there, or my selfe live the Wife to so bloody a Husband.

So starting up from the Table, and stepping unto a great gazing Window, the Casement whereof standing wide open behinde her: violently shee leaped out thereat, which beeing an huge height in distance from the ground, the fall did not onely kill her, but also shivered her body into many peeces. Which Rossiglione perceiving, hee stoode like a body without a soule, confounded with the killing of so deare a friend, losse of a chaste and honourable wife, and all through his owne overcredulous conceit.

Upon further conference with his private thoughts, and remorsefull acknowledgement of his heinous offence, which repentance (too late) gave him eyes now to see, though rashnesse before would not permit him to consider; these two extreamities inlarged his dulled understanding. First, he grew fearfull of the friends and followers to murthered Guardastagno, as also the whole Country of Provence, in regard of the peoples generall love unto him; which being two maine and important motives, both to the detestation of so horrid an act, and immediate severe revenge to succeede thereon: he made such provision as best he could, and as so sodaine a warning would give leave, he fled away secretly in the night season.

These unpleasing newes were soone spread abroad the next morning, not only of the unfortunate accidents, but also of Rossiglions flight; in regard whereof, the dead bodyes being found, and brought together, as well by the people belonging to Guardastagno, as them that attended on the Lady: they were layed in the Chappell of Rossigliones Castle; where, after so much lamentation for so great a misfortune to befall them, they were honourably enterred in one faire Tombe, with excellent Verses engraven thereon, expressing both their noble degree, and by what unhappy meanes, they chanced to have buriall in that very place.

THE TENTH NOVELL

WHEREIN IS DECLARED, THAT SOMETIME BY ADVENTUROUS ACCIDENT, RATHER THEN ANY REASONABLE COMPREHENSION, A MAN MAY ESCAPE OUT OF MANIFOLD PERILLES, BUT ESPECIALLY IN OCCURRENCES OF LOVE.

A PHYSITIANS *wife laide a Lover of her Maides (supposing him to be dead) in a Chest, by reason that he had drunke Water, which usually was given to procure a sleepy entrancing. Two Lombard usurers, stealing the Chest, in hope of a rich booty, carryed it into their owne house, where afterward the man awaking, was apprehended for a Theefe. The Chamber-maide to the Physitians wife, going before the bench of Justice, accuseth her selfe for putting the imagined dead body into the Chest, by which meanes he escapeth hanging. And the theeves which stole away the Chest, were condemned to pay a great summe of money.*

AFTER that the King had concluded his Novell, there remained none now but Dioneus to tell the last: which himselfe confessing, and the King commaunding him to proceede, hee beganne in this manner. So many miseries of unfortunate Love, as all of you have already related, hath not onely swolne your eyes with weeping, but also made sicke our hearts with sighing: yea (Gracious Ladies) I my selfe finde my spirits not meanly afflicted thereby. Wherefore the whole day hath bene very irkesome to me, and I am not a little glad, that it is so neere ending. Now, for the better shutting it up altogether, I would be very loath to make an addition, of any more such sad and mournfull matter, good for nothing but onely to feede melancholly humor, and from which (I hope) my faire Starres will defend me. Tragicall discourse, thou art no fit companion for me, I will therefore report a Novell which may minister a more joviall kinde of argument, unto whose Tales that must be told to morrow, and with the expiration of our present Kings reigne, to rid us of all heart-greeving hereafter.

Know then (most gracious assembly) that it is not many yeeres since, when there lived in Salerne, a very famous Physitian, named Signieur Mazzeo della Montagna, who being already well entred into yeeres, would (neverthelesse) marrie with a beautifull young Mayden of the City, bestowing rich garments, gaudie attyres, Ringes, and Jewelles on her, such as few Women else could any way equall, because hee loved her most deerely. Yet being an aged man, and never remembring, how vaine and idle a thing it is, for age to make such an unfitting Election, injurious to both; and therefore endangering that domesticke agreement, which ought to be the sole and maine comfort of Marriage: it maketh me therefore to misdoubt, that as in our former Tale of Signiour Ricciardo de Cinzica, some dayes of the Calender did here seeme as distastefull, as those that occasioned the other Womans discontentment. In such unequall choyses, Parents commonly are more blameworthy, then any imputation, to bee layde on the young Women, who gladdely would enjoy such as in heart they have elected: but that their Parents, looking through the glasse of greedie lucre, doe overthrow both their owne hopes, and the faire fortunes of their children together.

Yet to speake uprightly of this young married Wife, she declared her selfe to be of a wise and chearfull spirit, not discoraged with her unequalitie of marriage: but bearing all with a contented browe, for feare of urging the very least mislike in her Husband. And he, on the other side, when occasions did not call him to visite his Patients, or to be present at the Colledge among his fellow-Doctours, would alwayes bee chearing and comforting his Wife, as one that could hardly affoord to be out of her company. There is one especiall fatall misfortune, which commonly awaiteth on olde Mens marriages; when freezing December will match with flourishing May, and greene desires appeare in age, beyond all possibility of performance. Nor are there wanting good store of wanton Gallants, who hating to see Beauty in this manner betrayed, and to the embraces of a loathed bed, will make their folly seene in publike appearance, and by their daily proffers of amorous services (seeming compassionate of the womans disaster) are usually the cause of jealous suspitions, and very heinous houshold discontentments.

Among divers other, that faine would be nibling at this bayte of beautie, there was one, named Ruggiero de Jeroly, of honourable parentage, but yet of such a beboshed and disordered life, as neither Kindred or Friends, were willing to take any knowledge of him, but utterly gave him over to his dissolute courses: so that, throughout all Salerne, his conditions caused his generall contempt, and he accounted no better but even as a theeving and lewde company. The Doctours Wife, had a Chamber-maide attending on her; who, notwithstanding all the ugly deformities in Ruggiero, regarding more his person then his imperfections (because he was a compleate and well-featured youth) bestowed her affection most entirely on him, and oftentimes did supplie his wants, with her owne best meanes.

Ruggiero having this benefite of the Maides kinde love to him, made it an hopefull mounting Ladder, whereby to derive some good liking from the Mistresse, presuming rather on his outward comely parts, then any other honest qualitie that might commend him. The Mistresse knowing what choise her Maide had made, and unable by any perswasions to remoove her, tooke knowledge of Ruggieroes private resorting to her house, and in meere love to her Maide (who had very many especiall deservings in her) oftentimes she would (in kinde manner) rebuke him, and advise him to a more settled course of life; which counsell, that it might take the better effect; she graced with liberall gifts: one while with Golde, others with Silver, and often with garments, for his comelier accesse thither; which bounty, he (like a lewde mistaker) interpreted as assurances of her affection to him, and that he was more gracefull in her eye, then any man else could be.

In the continuance of these proceedings, it came to passe, that Master Doctor Mazzeo (being not onely a most expert Physitian, but likewise as skilfull in Chirurgerie beside) had a Patient in cure, who by great misfortune, had one of his legges broken all in pieces; which some weaker judgement having formerly dealt withall, the bones and sinewes were become so fowly putrified, as he tolde the parties friends, that the legge must be quite cut off, or else the Patient must needes dye: yet he intended so to order the matter, that the perill should proceede no further, to prejudice any other part of the body. The case beeing thus resolved on with the Pacient and his Friends, the day and time was appointed when the deede should be done: and the Doctor conceiving, that except the Patient were sleepily entranced, he could not by any meanes endure the paine, but must needes hinder what he meant to do: by distillation he made such an artificiall Water, as (after the Patient hath received it) it will procure a kinde of a dead sleepe, and endure so long a space, as necessity requireth the use there of, in full performance of the worke.

After he had made this sleepy water, he put it into a glasse, wherewith it was filled (almost) up to the brimme; and till the time came when he should use it, hee set it in his owne Chamber-Window, never acquainting any one, to what purpose he had provided the water, nor what was his reason of setting it there; when it drew towards the evening, and he was returned home from his pacients, a Messenger brought him Letters from Malfy, concerning a great conflict happening there betweene two Noble Families, wherein divers were very dangerously wounded on either side, and without his speedy repairing thither, it would prove to the losse of many lives. Hereupon, the cure of the mans leg must needs be prolonged, untill he was returned backe againe, in regard that many of the wounded persons were his worthy friends, and liberall bounty was there to be expected, which made him presently go aboord a small Barke, and forthwith set away towards Malfy.

This absence of Master Doctor Mazzeo, gave opportunity to adventurous Ruggiero, to visite his house (he being gone) in hope to get more Crownes, and curtisie from the Mistresse, under formall colour of courting the Maide. And being closely admitted into the house, when divers Neighbours were in conference with her Mistresse, and held her with much pleasing discourse, as required longer time then was expected: the Maide, had no other roome to conceale Ruggiero in, but onely the bed Chamber of her Master, where she lockt him in; because none of the houshold people should descry him, and stayed attending on her Mistris, till all the Guests tooke their leave, and were gone. Ruggiero thus remayning alone in the Chamber, for the space of three long houres and more, was visited neither by Maide nor Mistris, but awaited when he should be set at liberty.

Now, whether feeding on salt meates before his coming thither, or customary use of drinking, which maketh men unable any long while to abstaine as being never satisfied with excesse; which of these two extreames they were, I know not: but drinke needs he must. And, having no other meanes for quenching his thirst, espied the glasse of water standing in the Window, and thinking it to be some soveraigne kinde of water, reserved by the Doctor for his owne drinking, to make him lusty in his old yeeres, he tooke the glasse; and finding the water pleasing to his pallate, dranke it off every drop; then sitting downe on a Coffer by the beds side, soone after he fell into a sound sleepe, according to the powerfull working of the water.

No sooner were all the Neighbours gone, and the Maide at liberty from her Mistresse, but unlocking the doore, into the Chamber she went; and finding Ruggiero sitting fast asleepe, she began to hunch and punche him, entreating him (softly) to awake: but all was to no purpose, for he neither moved, or answered one word; whereat her patience being somewhat provoked, she punched him more rudely, and angerly saide: Awake for shame thou drowsie dullard, and if thou be so desirous of sleeping, get thee home to thine owne lodging, because thou art not allowed to sleepe here. Ruggiero being thus rudely punched, fell from off the Coffer flat on the ground, appearing no other in all respects, then as if he were a dead body. Whereat the Maide being fearfully amazed, plucking him by the nose and young beard, and what else she could devise to do, yet all her labour proving still in vaine: she was almost beside her wits, stamping and raving all about the roome, as if sense and reason had forsaken her; so violent was her extreame distraction.

Upon the hearing of this noise, her Mistris came sodainely into the Chamber, where being affrighted at so strange an accident, and suspecting that Ruggiero was dead indeed: she pinched him strongly, and burnt his finger with a candle, yet all was as fruitelesse as before. Then sitting downe, she began to consider advisedly with her selfe, how much her honour and reputation would be endangered hereby, both with her Husband, and in vulgar opinion when this should come to publike notice. For (quoth she to her Maide) it is not thy fond love to this unruly fellow that can sway the censure of the monster multitude, in beleeving his accesse hither onely to thee: but my good name, and honest repute, as yet untoucht with the very least taxation, will be rackt on the tenter of infamous judgement, and (though never so cleare) branded with generall condemnation. It is wisedome therefore, that we should make no noise but (in silence) consider with our selves, how to cleare the house of this dead body, by some such helpfull and witty device, as when it shall be found in the morning, his being here may passe without suspition, and the worlds rash opinion no way touch us.

Weeping and lamenting is now laid aside, and all hope in them of his lives restoring: onely to rid his body out of the house, that now requires their care and cunning: whereupon the Maide thus began. Mistresse (quoth she) this evening, although it was very late, at our next Neighbours doore (who you know is a Joyner by his trade) I saw a great Chest stand; and, as it seemeth, for a publike sale, because two or three nights together, it hath not bene thence removed: and if the owner have not lockt it, all invention else cannot furnish us with the like helpe. For therein will we lay his body, whereon I will bestow two or three wounds with my Knife, and leaving him so, our house can be no more suspected concerning his being here, then any other in the streete beside; nay rather farre lesse, in regard of your husbands credite and authority. Moreover, hereof I am certaine, that he being of such bad and disordered qualities: it will the more likely be imagined, that he was slaine by some of his own loose companions, being with them about some pilfering busines, and afterward hid his body in the chest, it standing so fitly for the purpose, and darke night also favouring the deed.

The Maids counsell past under the seale of allowance, only her Mistris thought it not convenient, that (having affected him so deerely) she should mangle his body with any wounds; but rather to let it be gathered by more likely-hood, that villaines had strangled him, and then conveyed his body into the Chest. Away she sends the Maide, to see whether the Chest stood there still, or no; as indeede it did, and unlockt, whereof they were not a little joyfull. By the helpe of her Mistresse, the Maide tooke Ruggiero upon her shoulders, and bringing him to the doore, with dilligent respect that no one could discover them; in the Chest they laide him, and so there left him, closing downe the lidde according as they found it.

In the same streete, and not farre from the Joyner, dwelt two yong men who were Lombards, living upon the interest of their moneyes, coveting to get much, and to spend little. They having observed where the Chest stood, and wanting a necessary mooveable to houshold, yet loath to lay out money for buying it: complotted together this very night, to steale it thence, and carry it home to their house, as accordingly they did; finding it somewhat heavy, and therefore imagining, that matter of woorth was contained therein. In the Chamber where their wives lay, they left it; and so without any further search till the next morning, they laid them downe to rest likewise.

Ruggiero, who had now slept a long while, the drinke being digested, and the vertue thereof fully consummated; began to awake before day. And although his naturall sleepe was broken, and his senses had recovered their former power, yet notwithstanding, there remained such an astonishment in his braine, as not onely did afflict him all the day following, but also divers dayes and nights afterward. Having his eyes wide open, and yet not discerning any thing, he stretched forth his armes every where about him, and finding himselfe to be enclosed in the Chest, he grew more broad awake, and said to himselfe. What is this? Where am I? Do I wake or sleepe? Full well I remember, that not long since I was in my sweet-hearts Chamber, and now (me thinkes) I am mewed up in a Chest. What should I thinke hereof? Is Master Doctor returned home, or hath some other inconvenience happned, whereby finding me a sleepe, she was enforced to hide me thus? Surely it is so, and otherwise it cannot be: wherefore, it is best for me to lye still, and listen when I can heare any talking in the Chamber.

Continuing thus a longer while then otherwise he would have done, because his lying in the bare Chest was somewhat uneasie and painfull to him; turning divers times on the one side, and then as often againe on the other, coveting still for ease, yet could not finde any: at length, he thrust his backe so strongly against the Chests side, that (it standing on an un-even ground) it began to totter, and after fell downe. In which fall, it made so loud a noise, as the women (lying in the beds standing by) awaked, and were so overcome with feare, that they had not the power to speake one word. Ruggiero also being affrighted with the Chests fall, and perceiving how by that meanes it was become open, he thought it better, least some other sinister fortune should befall him, to be at open liberty, then inclosed up so strictly. And because he knew not where he was, as also hoping to meete with his Mistresse; he went all about groping in the darke, to find either some staires or doore, whereby to get forth.

When the Women (being then awake) heard his trampling, as also his justling against the doores and windowes; they demaunded, Who was there? Ruggiero, not knowing their voyces, made them no answer; wherefore they called to their husbands, who lay very soundly sleeping by them, by reason of their so late walking abroad, and therefore heard not this noise in the house. This made the Women much more timorous, and therefore rising out of their beddes, they opened the Casement towards the streete, crying out aloude, Theeves, Theeves. The neighbours arose upon this outcry, running up and downe from place to place, some engirting the house, and others entering into it: by means of which troublesome noise, the two Lombards awaked, and seizing there upon poore Ruggiero (who was well-neere affrighted out of his wittes, at so strange an accident, and his owne ignorance, how he happened thither, and how to escape from them) he stood gazing on them without any answer.

By this time, the Sergeants and other Officers of the City, ordinarily attending on the Magistrate, being raised by the tumult of this uproare, were come into the house, and had poore Ruggiero committed unto their charge: who bringing him before the Governor, was forthwith called in question, and known to be of a most wicked life, a shame to all his friends and kindred. He could say little for himselfe, never denying his taking in the house, and therefore desiring to finish all his fortunes together, desperately confessed, that he came with a fellonious intent to rob them, and the Governor gave him sentence to be hanged.

Soone were the newes spread throughout Salerne; that Ruggiero was apprehended, about robbing the house of the two usuring Lombardes: which when Mistresse Doctor and her Chamber-maide heard, they were confounded with most strange admiration, and scarsely credited what they themselves had done the night before, but rather imagined all matters past, to be no more than meerely a dreame, concerning Ruggieroes dying in the house, and their putting him into the Chest, so that by no likely or possible meanes, he could be the man in this perillous extreamitie.

In a short while after, Master Doctor Mazzeo was returned from Malfy, to proceede in his cure of the poore mans legge; and calling for his glasse of Water, which he left standing in his owne Chamber window, it was found quite empty, and not a drop in it: whereat he raged so extreamly, as never had the like impatience bene noted in him. His wife, and her Maide, who had another kinde of businesse in their braine, about a dead man so strangely come to life againe, knew not well what to say; but at the last, his Wife thus replyed somewhat angerly. Sir (quoth she) what a coyle is here about a paltry glasse of Water, which perhaps hath bene spilt, yet neyther of us faulty therein? Is there no more such water to be had in the world? Alas deere Wife (saide he) you might repute it to be a common kinde of Water, but indeed it was not so; for I did purposely compound it, onely to procure a dead seeming sleepe: And so related the whole matter at large, of the Pacients legge, and his Waters losse.

When she had heard these words of her husband, presently she conceived, that the water was drunke off by Ruggiero, which had so sleepily entranced his sences, as they verily thought him to be dead, wherefore she saide. Beleeve me Sir, you never acquainted us with any such matter, which would have procured more carefull respect of it: but seeing it is gone, your skill extendeth to make more, for now there is no other remedy. While thus Master Doctor and his Wife were conferring together, the Maide went speedily into the City, to understand truly, whither the condemned man was Ruggiero, and what would now become of him. Being returned home againe, and alone with her Mistresse in the Chamber, thus she spake. Now trust me Mistresse, not one in the City speaketh well of Ruggiero, who is the man condemned to dye; and, for ought I can perceive, he hath neither Kinsman nor Friend that will doe any thing for him; but he is left with the Provost, and must be executed to morrow morning. Moreover Mistresse, by such instructions as I have received, I can well-neere informe you, by what meanes he came to the two Lombards house, if all be true that I have heard.

You know the Joyner before whose doore the Chest stoode, wherein we did put Ruggiero; there is now a contention betweene him and another man, to whom (it seemeth) the Chest doth belong; in regard whereof, they are ready to quarrell extreamly each with other. For the one owing the Chest, and trusting the Joyner to sell it for him, would have him to pay him for the Chest. The Joyner denieth any sale thereof, avouching, that the last night it was stolne from his doore. Which the other man contrarying, maintaineth that he solde the Chest to the two Lombard usurers, as himselfe is able to affirme, because he found it in the house, when he (being present at the apprehension of Ruggiero) sawe it there in the same house. Hereupon, the Joyner gave him the lye, because he never sold it to any man; but if it were there, they had robd him of it, as he would make it manifest to their faces. Then falling into clamerous speeches they went together to the Lombardes house, even as I returned home. Wherefore Mistresse, as you may easily perceive, Ruggiero was (questionlesse) carried thither in the Chest, and so there found; but how he revived againe, I cannot comprehend.

The Mistresse understanding now apparantly, the full effect of the whole businesse, and in what manner it had bene carried, revealed to the Maide her husbands speeches, concerning the glasse of sleepie Water, which was the onely engine of all this trouble, clearly acquitting Ruggiero of the robbery, howsoever (in desparate fury, and to make an end of a life so contemptible) he had wrongfully accused himselfe. And notwithstanding this his hard fortune, which hath made him much more infamous then before, in all the dissolute behaviour of his life: yet it could not quaile her affection towards him; but being loath he should dye for some other mans offence, and hoping his future reformation; she fell on her knees before her Mistresse, and (drowned in her teares) most earnestly entreated her, to advise her with some such happy course, as might be the safety of poore Ruggieroes life. Mistresse Doctor, affecting her Maide dearely, and plainely perceiving, that no disastrous fortune whatsoever, could alter her love to condemned Ruggiero; hoping the best hereafter, as the Maide her selfe did, and willing to save life rather then suffer it to be lost without just cause, she directed her in such discreet manner, as you will better conceive by the successe.

According as she was instructed by her Mistresse, she fell at the feete of Master Doctor, desiring him to pardon a great error, whereby she had over-much offended him. As how? said Master Doctor. In this manner (quoth the Maide) and thus proceeded. You are not ignorant Sir, what a lewde liver Ruggiero de Jeroly is, and notwithstanding all his imperfections, how deerely I love him, as he protesteth the like to me, and thus hath our love continued a yeere, and more. You being gone to Malfy, and your absence granting me apt opportunity, for conference with so kinde a friend; I made the bolder, and gave him entrance into your house, yea even into mine owne Chamber, yet free from any abuse, neither did he (bad though he be) offer any. Thirsty he was before his comming thither, either by salt meat, or distempered diet, and I being unable to fetch him wine or water, by reason my Mistresse sat in the Hall, seriously talking with her Sisters; remembred, that I saw a violl of Water standing in your Chamber Window, which he drinking quite off, I set it empty in the place againe. I have heard your discontentment for the said Water, and confesse my fault to you therein: but who liveth so justly, without offending at one time or other? And I am heartily sory for my transgression; yet not so much for the water, as the hard fortune that hath followed thereon; because thereby Ruggiero is in danger to lose his life, and all my hopes are utterly lost. Let me entreat you therefore (gentle Master) first to pardon me, and then to grant me permission, to succour my poore condemned friend, by all the best meanes I can devise.

When the Doctor had heard all her discourse, angry though he were, yet thus he answered with a smile. Much better had it bin, if thy follies punishment had falne on thy selfe, that it might have paide thee with deserved repentance, upon thy Mistresses finding thee sleeping. But go and get his deliverance if thou canst, with this caution, that if ever hereafter he be seene in my house, the perill thereof shall light on thy selfe. Receiving this answer, for her first entrance into the attempt, and as her Mistresse had advised her, in all hast she went to the prison, where she prevailed so well with the Jaylor, that hee granted her private conference with Ruggiero. She having instructed him what he should say to the Provost, if he had any purpose to escape with life; went thither before him to the Provost, who admitting her into his presence, and knowing that shee was Master Doctors Maid, a man especially respected of all the City, he was the more willing to heare her message, he imagining that shee was sent by her Master.

Sir (quoth shee) you have apprehended Ruggiero de Jeroly, as a theefe, and judgement of death is (as I heare) pronounced against him: but hee is wrongfully accused, and is clearly innocent of such a heinous detection. So entring into the History, she declared every circumstance, from the originall to the end: relating truly, that being her Lover, shee brought him into her Masters house, where he dranke the compounded sleepy water, and reputed for dead, she laide him in the Chest. Afterward, she rehearsed the speeches betweene the Joyner, and him that laide claime to the Chest, giving him to understand thereby, how Ruggiero was taken in the Lombards house.

The Provost presently gathering, that the truth in this case was easie to be knowne;

sent first for Master Doctor Mazzeo, to know, whether he compounded any such water, or no: which he affirmed to be true, and upon what occasion he prepared it. Then the Joyner, the owner of the Chest, and the two Lombards, being severally questioned withall: it appeared evidently, that the Lombards did steale the Chest in the night season, and carried it home to their owne house. In the end, Ruggiero being brought from the prison, and demanded, where he was lodged the night before, made answer, that he knew not where. Onely he well remembred, that bearing affection to the Chamber-maide of Master Doctor Mazzeo della Montagna, she brought him into a Chamber, where a violl of water stoode in the Window, and he being extreamly thirsty, dranke it off all. But what became of him afterward (till being awake, he found himselfe enclosed in a Chest, and in the house of the two Lombards) he could not say any thing.

When the Provost had heard all their answers, which he caused them to repeate over divers times, in regard they were very pleasing to him: he cleared Ruggiero from the crime imposed on him, and condemned the Lombards in three hundred Ducates, to be given to Ruggiero in way of an amends, and to enable his marriage with the Doctors Mayde, whose constancie was much commended, and wrought such a miracle on penitent Ruggiero; that after his marriage, which was graced with great and honourable pompe, he regained the intimate love of all his kindred, and lived in most Noble condition, even as if he had never bene any disordered man.

If the former Novels had made all the Ladies sad and sighe, this last of Dioneus as much delighted them, as restoring them to their former jocond humor, and banishing Tragicall discourse for ever. The King perceiving that the Sun was neere setting, and his government as neere ending, with many kinde and courteous speeches, excused himselfe to the Ladies, for being the motive of such an argument, as expressed the infelicity of poore Lovers. And having finished his excuse, up he rose, taking the Crown of Lawrell from off his owne head, the Ladies awaiting on whose head he pleased next to set it, which proved to be the gracious Lady Fiammetta, and thus he spake. Here I place this Crowne on her head, that knoweth better then any other, how to comfort this faire assembly to morrow, for the sorrow which they have this day endured.

Madame Fiammetta, whose lockes of haire were curled, long, and like golden wiers, hanging somewhat downe over her white and delicate shoulders, her visage round, wherein the Damaske Rose and Lilly contended for priority, the eyes in her head, resembling those of the Faulcon messenger, and a dainty mouth; her lippes looking like two little Rubyes, with a commendable smile thus she replyed.

Philostratus, gladly I do accept your gift; and to the end that ye may the better remember your selfe, concerning what you have done hitherto: I will and command, that generall preparation be made against to morrow, for faire and happy fortunes hapning to Lovers, after former cruell and unkinde accidents. Which proposition was very pleasing to them all.

Then calling for the Master of the Houshold, and taking order with him, what was most needfull to be done; she gave leave unto the whole company (who were all risen) to go recreate themselves untill supper time. Some of them walked about the Garden, the beauty whereof banished the least thought of wearinesse. Others walked by the River to the Mill, which was not farre off, and the rest fell to exercises, fitting their owne fancies, untill they heard the summons for Supper. Hard by the goodly Fountaine (according to their wonted manner) they supped altogether, and were served to their no meane contentment: but being risen from the Table, they fell to their delight of singing and dancing. While Philomena led the dance, the Queene spake in this manner.

Philostratus, I intend not to varie from those courses heretofore observed by my predecessors, but even as they have already done, so it is my authority, to command a Song. And because I am well assured, that you are not unfurnished of Songs answerable to the quality of the passed Novels: my desire is, in regard we would not be troubled hereafter, with any more discourses of unfortunate Love, that you shall sing a Song agreeing with your owne disposition. Philostratus made answer, that hee was ready to accomplish her command, and without all further ceremony, thus he began.

THE SONG

Chorus. My teares do plainly prove,
How justly that poore heart hath cause to greeve
Which (under trust) findes Treason in his Love.

When first I saw her, that now makes me sigh,
Distrust did never enter in my thoughts.
So many vertues clearly shin'd in her,
That I esteem'd all martyrdome was light
Which Love could lay on me. Nor did I greeve,
Although I found my liberty was lost.
But now mine error I do plainly see:
Not without sorrow, thus betray'd to bee.
My teares do, etc.

For, being left by basest treachery
Of her in whom I most reposed trust:
I then could see apparant flatterie
In all the fairest shewes that she did make.
But when I strove to get forth of the snare,
I found my selfe the further plunged in.
For I beheld another in my place,
And I cast off, with manifest disgrace.
My, etc.

Then felt my heart such hels of heavy woes,
Not utterable. I curst the day and houre
When first I saw her lovely countenance,
Enricht with beautie, farre beyond all other:
Which set my soule on fire, enflamde each part,
Making a martyrdome of my poore hart.
My faith and hope being basely thus betrayde;
I durst not moove, to speake I was affrayde.
My teares do, etc.

Thou canst (thou powerfull God of Love) perceive,
My ceasselesse sorrow, voyde of any comfort:
I make my moane to thee, and do not fable,
Desiring, that to end my misery,
Death may come speedily, and with his Dart
With one fierce stroke, quite passing through my heart:
To cut off future fell contending strife,
An happy end be made of Love and Life.
My teares do, etc.

No other meanes of comfort doth remaine,
To ease me of such sharpe afflictions,
But onely death. Grant then that I may die,
To finish greefe and life in one blest houre.
For, being bereft of any future joyes,
Come, take me quickly from so false a friend.
Yet in my death, let thy great power approve,
That I died true, and constant in my Love.
My teares do, etc.

Happy shall I account this sighing Song,
If some (beside my selfe) do learne to sing it,
And so consider of my miseries,
As may incite them to lament my wrongs.
And to be warned by my wretched fate;
Least (like my selfe) themselves do sigh too late.
Learne Lovers, learne, what tis to be unjust,
And be betrayed, where you repose best trust.

The words contained in this Song, did manifestly declare, what torturing afflictions poore Philostratus felt, and more (perhaps) had beene perceived by the lookes of the Lady whom he spake of, being then present in the dance; if the sodaine ensuing darknesse had not hid the crimson blush, which mounted up into her face. But the Song being ended, and divers other beside, lasting till the houre of rest drew on; by command of the Queene, they all repaired to their Chambers.

WHEREON, ALL THE DISCOURSES DO PASSE UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF THE MOST NOBLE LADY FIAMMETTA: CONCERNING SUCH PERSONS, AS HAVE BENE SUCCESSEFULL IN THEIR LOVE, AFTER MANY HARD AND PERILLOUS MISFORTUNES.

Now began the Sunne to dart foorth his golden beames, when Madam Fiammetta (incited by the sweete singing Birdes, which since the breake of day, sat merrily chanting on the trees) arose from her bed: as all the other Ladies likewise did, and the three young Gentlemen descending downe into the fields, where they walked in a gentle pace on the greene grasse, untill the Sunne were risen a little higher. On many pleasant matters they conferred together, as they walked in severall companies, till at the length the Queene, finding the heate to enlarge it selfe strongly, returned backe to the Castle; where when they were all arrived, she commanded, that after this mornings walking, their stomackes should be refreshed with wholsom Wines, as also divers sorts of banquetting stuffe. Afterward, they all repaired into the Garden, not departing thence, untill the houre of dinner was come: at which time, the Master of the houshold, having prepared every thing in decent readinesse, after a solemne song was sung, by order from the Queene, they were seated:

When they had dined, to their owne liking and contentment, they began (in continuation of their former order) to exercise divers dances, and afterward voyces to their instruments, and many pretty Madrigals and Roundelayes. Upon the finishing of these delights, the Queene gave them leave to take their rest, when such as were so minded, went to sleep, others solaced themselves in the Garden. But after midday was overpast, they met (according to their wonted manner) and as the Queene had commanded, at the faire Fountaine; where she being placed in her seate royall, and casting her eye upon Pamphilus, she bad him begin the dayes discourses, of happy successe in love, after disastrous and troublesome accidents; who yeelding thereto with humble reverence, thus began.

Many Novels (gracious Ladies) do offer themselves to my memory, wherewith to beginne so pleasant a day, as it is her Highnesse desire that this should be: among which plenty, I esteeme one above all the rest, because you may comprehend thereby, not onely the fortunate conclusion, wherewith we intend to begin our day; but also, how mighty the forces of Love are, deserving to be both admired and reverenced. Albeit there are many, who scarsely knowing what they say, do condemne them with infinite grosse imputations: which I purpose to disprove, and (I hope) to your no little pleasing.

COOPER UNION LIBRARY
3 1206 04663924 7

WITHDRAWN FROM
COOPER UNION LIBRARY